

THE name of Cential India, though new, and still indefinite as to the exact limits of the territories it comprehends, has been adopted in this work because it is the appellation by which Malwa and the contiguous provinces are designated in the official records of the Supreme Government. This region was hardly to be traced in the best maps, and we knew little of its inhabitants beyond the reports of that continued warfare and anarchy to which they had been exposed for the last thirty years, when the outrages committed by the hordes of plunderers to whom it had become a home, compelled us to enter it with our armies in order that we might subdue them.

In January 1818 the Author was placed by the Marquis of Hastings in the military and political charge of Cential India, and during the four years he filled that station, his own atten-

tion, and that of the able public officers under his authority, was directed to the object of collecting materials for the illustration of its past and present condition. These he formed into a report, which was transmitted to Calcutta, where it was printed by order of Government. Several copies were sent to England, from which copious extracts found their way into periodical publications. This report having been drawn up amid the hurry of other duties, and when the Author was in a bad state of health, had many imperfections that required to be corrected: he therefore solicited permission from the Honourable Court of Directors to make it the groundwork of this memoir, which in consequence contains the substance of that official document.

Notwithstanding this advantage the Author has found his task much more difficult than he had anticipated, and he almost despairs of attracting general readers to a work, which, although it contains much new and interesting matter, is necessarily filled with names harsh and unpleasant to an Englishman's ear, and fatiguing to his memory. He has endeavoured to obviate this serious objection, by throwing many of the minute

details into the notes, and by transferring others to a very full Appendix and comprehensive Index. But, after all, these volumes must derive their chief merit from the collection of facts illustrative of the genuine history and character of the Natives of India, and from the fiscal and statistical information they contain

Though the previous studies and occupations of the Author had prepared him for the task he undertook, still there was such a blank to fill up; so little was known, and so much knowledge was indispensable before he could venture to transmit a report that was to be the foundation of public measures, that he would almost have shrunk from the undertaking, had he not been assisted in his researches by many public officers distinguished for their zeal, activity, and talents. Their designations, the duties they performed, the nature of the communications they contributed, together with the other sources of information, are stated in the Appendix*. A perusal of this list will greatly enhance the value of the facts, and shew that they possess every requisite to establish their authenticity

So favourable an opportunity has seldom occurred of observing the character of all ranks of the Natives of India, as that which the Author enjoyed. The situation in which he was placed enabled him to obtain the most minute information at a period when peculiar circumstances tended to bring every virtue and vice that belonged to individuals or communities into prominent action ; and if he has succeeded in conveying this knowledge to the European reader, his object is attained. Throughout this work the Author has purposely abstained from making comparisons between the habits, privileges, and condition of the inhabitants of Central India, and those of other parts of that vast continent. Such opportunities presented themselves at every page, but even a superficial notice of them would have swelled these volumes to an inconvenient bulk ;—besides this, it was thought, for many reasons, expedient to reject them, and to leave to others the task of comparing the facts stated, with information derived from other sources. It appeared, however, incumbent on the Author to offer some general reflections on the fabric of the British power in the East, how far it has been

affected by late conquests, and also to state his opinions regarding the species of administration best adapted to Central India and countries similarly situated To this object he has devoted the concluding chapter, which contains the result of all his experience, nor has he there recommended any measure which he does not, from sincere conviction, believe to be both practicable and indispensable To explain this still farther, he may add, that there is not a sentiment therein expressed, which has not in substance, and nearly in words, been previously submitted, in a public or private form, to his official superiors, or to those whose duty it was to communicate with them, and he believes, that although differences of opinion may exist, chiefly as to the mode of introducing such arrangements, his suggestions are not essentially at variance with the sentiments entertained by the eminent persons to whom his letters were addressed

The Author need hardly state in this Preface, what a knowledge of the station he filled implies, that, in the prosecution of all his measures, he acted merely as the executive officer of the Supreme Government The peculiar circumstances

of the countries committed to his charge required that he should have great latitude of action, and this was granted to him with scarcely any restriction. Indeed, to this unlimited confidence, and to the personal as well as public support of the Marquis of Hastings, and the liberal and just principles of that nobleman's administration, he must ascribe that success with which his labours were attended.

The Appendix will be found to contain some valuable papers—A short memoir of the map, written by Lieutenant Gibbings, assistant-quarter-master-general, who constructed it, should have been included, but this useful document has unfortunately been lost: it becomes necessary, therefore, to state, that its contents shewed that the accompanying map of Central India was entirely composed from original and authentic materials. These consisted of measured routes and military surveys, corrected by the tables of latitudes and longitudes furnished by Captain Dangerfield, whose scientific papers, alike illustrative of the Geology and Geography of the countries he visited, will be noticed hereafter.

For his kind aid in correcting the press, and for his opinions and observations on different parts of this work, the Author is under great obligations to Mr W Hamilton, a gentleman well known to the public by his *Indian Gazetteer*, and *Description of Hindustan*, works which have diffused a general knowledge of our Eastern possessions beyond any that have been published

Mr W Hamilton has also digested a *Geographical Index of the Provinces, Cities, and Towns* mentioned in the course of the *Memoir*. This useful compendium has, for more easy reference, been kept distinct from the *General Index*, and forms the concluding number of the *Appendix* *

PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION.

THE Author, who has been flattered by this early demand for a Second Edition of the Memoir of Central India, has endeavoured, by a careful correction of every error, by a minute attention to the orthography of Indian words and proper names, and by explanatory notes, to render the work more worthy of the favourable reception it has met with from the public. He is indebted for a great part of these corrections and notes to his learned friend Graves Chamney Haughton, Esq., Professor of Hindû Literature at the College of Haileybury

CONTENTS

01

THE FIRST VOLUME

CHAPTER I Page

Observations on the Geography, Soil, Climate, and Productions of Central India	1
---	---

CHAPTER II

History of Malwa	22
------------------	----

CHAPTER III

Mahratta Invasion of Malwa	59
----------------------------	----

CHAPTER IV

The Families of the Puars of Dhar and Dewass	97
--	----

CHAPTER V

Family of Sindia . . .	116
------------------------	-----

CHAPTER VI

Family of Holkar . . .	142
------------------------	-----

CHAPTER VII

Events at the Court of Holkar	260
---------------------------------------	-----

CHAPTER VIII

Page

Ameer Khan.. 325

CHAPTER IX

Nabobs of Bhopal 349

CHAPTER X

Rise, Progress, and Annihilation of the Pindarries . . . 426

CHAPTER XI

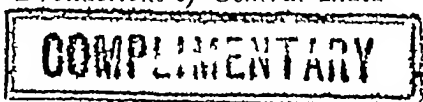
The Rajpoot Princes and Chiefs of Central India. . . 463

CHAPTER XII

Government of the States of Central India 527

CHAPTER I

*Observations on the Geography, Soil, Climate, and
Productions of Central India*



THE prefixed Map of the country now termed Central India, comprises territory from twenty-one to twenty-five degrees North latitude, and from seventy-three to eighty East longitude, or from Chittore in Mewar North to the Taptee river South, and from Bundelcund East to Guzerat West. It includes all those provinces which formerly belonged to the Soobah*, or Government

* According to Abul Fazel, the author of the Institutes of Akber, whose authority most European geographers have followed, the Soobah of Malwa lies between the twenty-second and twenty fifth degrees of North latitude, and the seventy-fifth and seventy-eighth of East longitude, being on the North bounded by Narwar and a range of hills, on the South by Boglanah, on the West by Ajmeer and Guzerat,

of Malwa The general application of the latter term to such an extent of country appears to have had less reference to the original limits of that province, than to the convenience and usage of the Delhi Sovereigns; whose vast empire was divided into Soobahs, or Governments, each of which was ruled by a Soobahdar or Viceroy; and the principal province of the territories placed under the authority of the latter, generally gave its name to the whole But we cannot have a stronger proof that these were political, not geographical denominations of countries, than that which we find in the changing boundaries of the different Soobahs of India under the Mahomedan rule The fact is, that the mandates and institutions of the Moghul emperors were alike unequal to alter the established usages of their Hindu subjects, or to make them forget the names and limits by which India was known to their ancestors, and they continued (whatever the Soobah was termed) to preserve the ancient divisions Thus it appears, that besides Malwa Proper, the dependant but separate countries of Harrowtee on the North-east of Nemaar to the South, and the hilly tracts of Rath, Bagu, Kantul, and part of Mewar to the West and North-west, were in-

its extent from Nunderbar to Chunderry being two hundred and thirty coss, and from Gurrah to Banswarra two hundred and forty-five coss

cluded by Mahomedans in that province, which, according to Hindu record, supported by the strong evidence of marked natural boundaries, consists merely of the level elevated plain extending North and South from the Vindhya mountains to the Chittoire and Mokundra range, and East and West from Bhopal to Dohud within these limits it maintains an uniform character, and in no part can they be passed without a distinct change in the features and elevation of the country

Malwa Proper may, therefore, be concisely described as a table-land, in general open, and highly cultivated, varied with small conical and table-crowned hills and low ridges, watered by numerous rivers* and small streams, and favoured

* Amongst the principal rivers we may enumerate the Chumbul and Chumbra, the great and lesser Kallee Sind, the Mhaee, Seepra, Parbuttee, Newy, and Ahor To these must be added, though not strictly within the limits of the province, the Nerbudda, which runs nearly East and West, and a few streams which flow into it all the other rivers of Malwa have a Northerly direction

The Mhaee, which is in Guzerat, a broad fine stream, attains in Malwa no great size or body of water, it has its rise in a small plain five miles West of Amjherra, and shortly after passing Bhopawur, pursues a Northerly course till it reaches the upper confines of Bagur, where the boundary hills give it a sudden turn Westward past Mongana it is, however, soon diverted from this direction by the high primary mountains of Mewar, which bend it South, and this

with a rich productive soil, and a mild climate, alike conducive to the health of man, and the liberal supply of his wants and luxuries

Malwa in only a few places attains a greater height above the level of the sea than two thousand feet, yet, from the uniform nature of the country through which the rivers that rise in this province find their way to the ocean, and the little

course it pursues, with little deviation, till it falls into the sea in the Gulf of Cambay, near the town of that name. This river is not deemed navigable above twelve or fifteen miles from its mouth, owing to its numerous shallows

The nominal source of the Chumbul is in a part of the Vindhya range, nine miles South-west of the cantonment of Mhow, but this part of the river is dry in the hot season, during which it owes its waters to other tributary streams. The current of this river is in most parts gentle, its bed rocky, and its course through Malwa much obstructed by shallows, but, after entering Harrowtee by an opening in the Mokundra range, it becomes a fine and deep stream

By the minute surveys which have been made of its course, it appears that the Nerbudda is navigable for small craft from the sea to eleven miles above Tulluckwarra, a distance of more than one hundred miles. Here commences a wild and hilly tract, which extends to a distance of ninety miles, in some parts of which the breadth of the river is so diminished, and its current so obstructed by rocks and shallows, that its navigation is altogether impossible. Above the Hurn Pahl, or Deer's Leap, it is narrow and rapid, but becomes again navigable about fifteen miles below Chiculdah, and with the exception of a few places where short land carriage might be established, continues so for some distance to the Eastward of Hoshungabad

variation in their banks, we shall probably not err much in assigning to its plains a greater elevation than most parts between the Northern mountains of Hindustan and the Nerbudda, and though the land of Omerkantah, where that river rises, may be higher than Malwa, even its elevation will be found less than that of the great central table-range which divides the Southern parts of the peninsula of India

Excepting to the North-west, there is a rise towards the province of Malwa from all quarters. to the South it is elevated one thousand seven hundred feet above the Valley of the Nerbudda, or Nemaar; and this occurs in a very short distance, from the abrupt ascent of the Vindhya mountains, which have little declivity towards the North. Though less strongly marked to the East and West, there is an equally well indicated ascent over the hilly tracts (branches of the Vindhya) which on the East pass Bhopal*, and on the West divide this province from Guzerat and Mewar. To the North-west there is an ascent to Mewar at the Chittore range, which is about two hundred feet high, but as the plain of Malwa declines to this point more than that amount, and

* Bhopal, the capital of this province, forms on the East the same exact boundary as Dohud does on the West. one gate of Bhopal is considered in Malwa, whilst the opposite belongs to Gondwarra

the country beyond it, or West of it, begins again to descend, none perhaps but the highest lands of Mewar can be considered on a level with the Southern parts of Malwa

The temperature of Malwa is, in general, not only mild, but the range of the thermometer unusually small, except during the latter part of the year, when great and sudden changes often take place. Though during the two months immediately succeeding the rainy season (when the hilly and woody parts should be shunned) fevers prevail here as in other parts of India, yet the climate must, on the whole, be considered as salubrious*, and, to those enervated by a long residence in the lower and warmer plains of India, pleasant and invigorating. The seasons are those common to Western India, and may chiefly be distinguished as the rainy, the cold, and the hot. The fall of rain during the months of June, July, August, and September, is, in general, mild and regular, and may in common seasons be estimated at about fifty inches. During this season, the range of the thermometer is exceedingly small, seldom falling lower than 72° night and morning,

* The prevailing complaint among the natives of Malwa is fever, and agues towards the close of the year. To the West of the Chumbul, an enlargement of the spleen is very general, it has been ascertained that the cholera morbus, which has so lately spread over India as an epidemic, always exists as a disease in this province.

or rising higher than 76° or 77° at noon. Though the mornings become cooler soon after the close of the rainy season, there is no very cold weather till the month of December. It continues all January, and part of February. In the latter month, in 1820, the thermometer stood, at six o'clock in the morning, at 28° . During the hot season which succeeds, the parching winds from the Northward and Westward, that prevail in most parts of India to an intense degree, are here comparatively mild and of short duration. The thermometer, however, during the day rises sometimes as high as 98° , but the nights are invariably cool and refreshing in Malwa.

As consisting of a flat and basaltic formation,* no variety of metallic minerals can be looked for in Malwa. Iron ore of good quality is plentiful, and in the boundary hills and primary mountains of Mewar and Marwar, which extend to the North-west between this province, Guzerat, and Ajmeer, copper and lead-mines are stated to have been formerly worked to some extent, and with considerable profit; but during the late troubled

* No II and No III of the Appendix are part of a Report from Captain Dangerfield, comprising his meteorological, geographical, and astronomical observations on the countries he visited. That scientific officer has also added his remarks on the geology of Central India, which he has illustrated by a sketch annexed to No II. The meteorological register kept by Captain Dangerfield forms No III.

times, this work was stopped, and it has not yet been resumed

The soil of Malwa, though generally of little depth, is celebrated for its fertility. It mostly consists of either a loose rich black loam, or a more compact ferrugineous mould, add to this the facility of artificial irrigation, and few parts of India will be found to possess more natural advantages, or to produce a greater variety of grain.*

Fruits were formerly in great abundance and perfection, and Abul Fazel mentions the luxuriance which the vine attained in Malwa. A mango is now produced, said to have been originally introduced from Goa by the Mahattas, which is, in size and flavour, in no degree inferior

* Of the vegetable productions of Malwa, the poppy for the extraction of opium is the principal, and constitutes a great portion of the export trade of that province. Of this drug, upwards of ten thousand maunds, or about 350,000 pounds of avoirdupois weight, are annually produced, of which quantity six thousand maunds may be reckoned surplus for exportation. Amongst the grain we may chiefly enumerate wheat, gram, peas, jowarry, bajrie, moong, oorud, Indian corn, and toowur. Of the two first the largest amount is exported. Rice is grown in small quantities for internal use, but there is cultivated more than sufficient for home consumption, of sugar-cane, tobacco, cotton, linseed, teel or sweet-oil plant, garlick, turmeric, and ginger. Indigo is also raised in small quantities, and the morinda citrifolia is, on account of its root, which affords an excellent red dye, and is a considerable article of commerce, reared to a great extent.

to those of its parent stock But gardens have for the last thirty years received little attention in this province, and the generality of its fruits are not remarkable for their quality, nor in great abundance

There are in Malwa and the adjoining provinces many forests, several of which abound in fine timber, particularly the teak, but these will be noticed hereafter, as forming a valuable article of commerce

The animals, wild and tame, are the same as in other parts of India Amongst the wilder classes inhabiting the hilly and woody tracts, we may enumerate the tiger, leopard, bear, wolf, hyæna, wild hog, antelope, neelgahee or white-footed antelope, sambar, and other deer species The skin of the sambar, when well prepared, forms an excellent material for the military accoutrements of the soldiers of the Native Powers, and is exported to the neighbouring countries Amongst domestic animals, the horned cattle are much esteemed, and constitute a large article of export Sheep and goats are neither numerous, nor held in any estimation, but the neighbouring provinces of Ajmeer and Mewar produce them in great numbers, and of a good kind

Though horses are reared in Malwa, it has never obtained a high reputation for the breed of that animal, arising in some measure from the proximity of the celebrated breeding province of

Kattywai, and the preference given by the Mahomedans to the Northern horse, and by the Mahrattas to the fine race which they brought with them from the Deckan

Camels are seldom bred in Malwa, nor does the climate seem favourable to them; they are mostly brought from the dry, sandy, and warmer plains of Marwai, where they are reared in great numbers, and of superior size and strength

Fish, of good size and flavour, abound in most of the rivers of Malwa; but as neither these, nor the small animals of chase, and birds of prey and game, differ from those known in other parts of India, a distinct enumeration of them is unnecessary

Some of the cities and towns* of Malwa have

* The principal cities and towns of Malwa are included in the following list Oojem, Indore, Dhar, Rutlam, Nolye or Burnuggur, Katchrode, Oneil, Mundissor, Jawud, Rampoor, Bampoora, Munassa, Aggur, Seronge, Bhulsa, Shujahalpoor, Ashta, Shalyehanpoor, Dewass, Dug, Gungraur, Tal, Mundawul, Mahidpoor, Sarungpoor, Bhopal, Dohud, and Mandoo Of these the most ancient is Oojem, which ranks high among the sacred cities noticed in the Purânas of the Hindus, and is mentioned by Greek historians, but the modern Oojem stands two miles South of the former city, which is said to have been buried under a shadow of earth, but which appears to me to have been overwhelmed by the Seepira river, and the new city, which stands nearly as high, has been often threatened with a similar fate

Next in rank to Oojem, we may perhaps place Dhar, or

been much celebrated both in ancient and modern history Of some of these it is now difficult to trace the sites, or discover the names, but many deserve the notice of the antiquary, from the re-

Dharanugguree, as still called by the Hindus it is probably the ancient Dharanuggur, but its importance in the authentic history of Malwa is chiefly derived from its becoming, on the transfer of the Government from Oojein, the seat of the princes of that province previously to their final establishment at Mandoo This last city, though containing noble and interesting remains, has long since been entirely desolate it will be hereafter noticed

Indore, as a city, is of modern date That part of the Holkar capital called Old Indore, was a small village, the site of which pleased Ahalya Bae, who encamped at it after the death of Mulhar Row Holkar She ordered the head officer of the district to remove to it from Kumpail, and, having built a new city on the opposite or Western bank of the small clear stream which flowed past it, gave it the same name of Indore Her partialty for this spot soon raised it to a state of comparative prosperity, though she continued through life to reside at the city of Mhysir

The origin of Bhilsa and Mundissor is involved in that fable which is common to all early Hindu history The former is said to have been built by the Hindu demigod Rámachandra, and the latter by his son Desaretha, who gave his name to the city, which it retained till modern times, when it was corrupted by the Western Rajpoots to Dussore, and is now generally called Mundissor

Shujahalpoor and Shahjehanpoor derive their names from their founders The former was built by Shujah Khan, one of the most distinguished governors of Malwa, and the latter by the Emperor Shah Jehan

Seronge, corrupted from Sheer Gunge, derives its name

PROVINCE OF NEMAUR

mans of architecture, sculpture, and inscriptions to be found amid their ruins

The small Province of NEMAUR is that part of the Valley of the Nerbudda which lies between Hindia East and Kotia West, and between the Vindhya range North and the Satpooia South. Its length is about one hundred and thirty miles,

and origin from its site, becoming the Gunge, or cantonments, of the Emperor Sheer Shah

Rutlam was greatly increased, and, according to some accounts, entirely founded during the reign of Shah Jehan by Ruttun Singh, a Rhattore Rajpoot, on whom the district of which it is now the capital, was bestowed as a reward for military services

Nolye was built by Raja Nol, or Nowul. Its modern appellation of Burnuggur has its origin in a strange vulgar superstition of names of bad omen, which must not be pronounced before the morning meal. The city is called either Nolye or Burnuggur, according to the hour in which its mention becomes necessary

Sarungpoor is an ancient city, and the head of a Sircar, or large division of the country. It was greatly improved by Baz Bahadur, the last Musulman prince of Malwa who assumed the title of King

Bhopal, we are told, derived its name from its Rajpoot founder, the minister of the celebrated Hindu Raja Bhoj, and was built at the same time that his master formed the present district of Tal into a lake, and founded near it the city of Bhojpoor, now in ruins

Among the ruins which merit the attention of the antiquary, we may mention those of the ancient town of Woone, in Nemaaur, and the Caves of Baug in Rath, and those of Dumnar, near the Chumbul

PROVINCE OF NEMAU

and its general breadth from thirty to forty, but in the centre it may be reckoned above seventy. On the North bank of the Nerbudda, the boundary mountains seldom recede more than eighteen miles from its banks, and at the Hurn Pahl*, or Deer's Leap, on the Western extremity of the province, the two ranges are merely divided by the river. The greater part of Nemaur is a fertile undulating plain, once perfectly open, flourishing, and highly cultivated, but of late years overgrown in many parts with low jungle, or brushwood. The Western portion on both sides the river, including Burwancee, Chiculdah, Dhurmpooree, Sultanabad, and as far as Kurgond, is generally level and cultivated, but the Eastern portion, from the West of the sacred Island of Mundatta† to Kautcote, is, on the Northern bank‡ of the Nerbudda,

* The name of the Hurn Pahl is derived from the circumstance of the river being here obstructed by large masses of basalt, rising about ten or eleven feet above the ordinary level of the stream, and giving passage to the river through three very narrow channels, across each of which, it is supposed, an antelope could bound.

† This island, which is about thirty-eight miles above Mhysir, is the religious resort of Hindu pilgrims from all quarters, as containing the shrine of Ongkar, it being considered one of the twelve places of Mahadeo's presence on this earth. See *Mundatta*, in Geographical Index, vol. II.

‡ The North of the Nerbudda from Kautcote to Nemawur opposite Hindia, is deemed by the natives part of Gondwarra, and the inhabitants speak the Gondee dialect.

PROVINCE OF NEMAUR

one mass or cluster of low hills covered with thick jungle, and almost entirely desolate, excepting on the immediate borders of the river, where some predatory Rajpoot chiefs found fastnesses secure from pursuit, whence, till the establishment of the English power, they plundered the neighbouring districts from Asseer to the gates of Indore. On the Southern bank, for three or four miles from the river, the country has the same features as to the North, but beyond that, it resembles other parts of the province, excepting that from the desertion or destruction of its population, less cultivation exists, and low jungle has in most parts taken its place.

The soil of Nemaur is not dissimilar to that of Malwa, and its pasturage is reckoned peculiarly fine. Besides the Nerbudda, which traverses its whole length, it is well watered by the several tributary streams of that river.

The greatest part of the lands on the Northern bank of the Nerbudda belong to the Governments of Dhar and Holkar, excepting the small district of Bancaneer, which is the property of Sindia, and some of the hilly parts of the province, which Rajpoot and Bheel chiefs continue to possess.

Mhysir must be considered the principal, and almost only place of note in Nemaur. This ancient city, which is pleasantly situated on the Northern bank of the Nerbudda, with a fort elevated above the town, has long been, as well as

its attached lands, accounted a distinct portion of territory, probably from having been under the immediate management of the head of the Holkar family, when it was then capital. That benefit which it formerly derived from being the residence of Ahalya Baee, is now given to it as containing the ashes of that great and venerated woman. Public buildings of different kinds are erecting, and a most spacious and highly finished flight of stone steps from the town to the river, meant, with adjoining temples, to be dedicated to her memory, is nearly completed.

With the exception of the small district of Burwanee, the greatest part of Southern Nemaar consists of the ancient Sircar, or Government, of Beejaghur, the name of which is now only preserved in the ruins of the capital, situated within the limits of a large hill-fort in the Satpoora range. This sircar, like others, underwent, during the Mahomedan sway, different modifications. One writer mentions that, in the eighth year of the reign of Shah Jehan, the Sircar of Beejaghur, part of the Hindia district, and some others in the space between the Nerbudda and the Taptee, were directed to be incorporated into the Soobah of Candeish, and Abul Fazel calls Beejaghur the capital of Candeish, and states it to have been for a long time the residence of its viceroy. These arbitrary changes confirm what has been said regarding the usage of the Delhi Government.

Hindu tradition, corroborated by names of districts and by difference of language (a very strong testimony) places as the Southern boundary of Nemaun the Satpura range: according to them, the hill fort of Asseer* is the boundary of the two provinces, and by some it is said to be half in Nemaun, and half in Candesh

From the Vindhya range on the Western extremity of Nemaun, there extends North a hilly tract separating Malwa from Guzerat, whose general breadth is from fifty to seventy miles, and which is terminated by the Southern and Western boundaries of Mewar. The Southern portion of this tract, which lies between Tandlah and the Neibudda, constitutes what the Hindus term RATH, and contains the several petty states of Jabooah, Ally, Babia, Jobut, and the lands of then several dependent chiefs, the great proportion of whose subjects are Bheels. Though a considerable portion of this district consists of rocky hills and thick forests, yet many fertile and well-watered valleys lie amidst the successive ranges of its hills, which pursue almost invariably a Northerly direction, nearly parallel and equidistant. This country

* This strong fortress, according to popular tradition, derives its name from its founder Assa, a rich and celebrated Hindu Zemindar, or landholder, of the Aheer tribe, and by corruption Assa Aheer has been converted into Asseer

forms an intermediate step, elevated above Guzerat, and rising towards Malwa; but it is neither in climate, nor production, equal to the latter

Rath has, with the exception of the capitals of the petty states, few large towns or villages. Amongst the former, Jabooah principally merits notice, from its romantic situation in a small rich valley, near the base of a low range of hills.

The hills of Rath abound in iron ore; and the forests afford, besides the teak and bamboos, many timber-trees, adapted not only to building, but to many other useful and ornamental purposes. There are several well-frequented roads through this province, connecting Malwa with Guzerat.

The province of BAGUR is a part of the same hilly tract as Rath, from which it is divided by merely a narrow slip of Malwa, which projects into it from Petlawud to Dohud. It is bounded on the North by Kantul and Mewar, and East and West by Malwa and Guzerat. The country in no point differs from that of Rath but in the lesser number of its streams, fewer valleys, and less cultivation, excepting on its Northern extremity, where the soil is good and fruitful. The principal part of the inhabitants of Bagur are Bheels and Meenahs of the cultivating classes, under the authority of Rajpoot chiefs and Thakoors, or Barons. The greater part of this province belongs to the petty Princes of Banswarra and Doon-

PROVINCE OF KANTUL

guhphoor, whose capitals, with Saugwaria, are the only places of any note in the country. Many ruined towns, villages, temples, and interesting Hindu antiquities, are scattered over its Northern division, indicative of a former state of prosperity and cultivation. The roads through it leading by Doongurhphoor and Lunawarra into Guzciat, are good, and much frequented. From its extensive and thick forests, fevers of a malignant nature are prevalent during the two months immediately succeeding the rainy season, nor can the climate at any period of the year be deemed pleasant or salubrious.

KANTUL is a small district, rather than a province, lying between Bagur and Mewar, and extending Westward from Mundissor to the Banswarra and Odeypoor territories. Its length is about forty miles, and breadth from twenty to twenty-five miles. It comprises the principal part of the territories of the Raja of Pertaubguh. His capital is a large fortified town, but his chief residence has always been at Dewla, twelve miles West of it. The greater part of the country is level, open, and well cultivated. It is much higher than Bagur, being nearly of the same elevation as that part of Malwa* which it adjoins. Roads to

* Some intelligent Hindus to whom I have spoken, account part of Kantul in Malwa, but the name signifies border or boundary.

Guzerat, Kattywar, and Cutch, lead through this province The soil of Kantul is good, and produces opium and other crops similar to those of Malwa It is well watered by small tributary streams of the Mhaee which river passes near its Southern boundary

The province of HARROWTEE lies on the North-east extremity of Malwa, and is separated from it by the Mokundra hills, and the continuation of the Chittore range It possesses the general features and the same natural advantages as Malwa, with the exception of its climate, which, from its more elevated hilly girdle, is much warmer, and less salubrious Its elevation differs little from that of the adjoining part of Malwa; and it is fertilized by some of the same rivers*, which in their passage through this district become considerable streams The principal towns are Kotah, Patun, and Boondée, the first and last of which are the capitals of the Rajpoot princes who divide this province Patun, or, as it is commonly called, Jalrapatun, founded by the Raj Rana Zalim Singh of Kotah, has within twenty years risen from a village to be one of the most beautiful and opulent cities in Malwa

* Kalee Sind, Chumbul, Ahor, &c

PROVINCE OF HARROWTEE

The hilly belt which forms the Eastern boundary of the level plains of Malwa, and which appears to divide that province from Bundelcund in the same way as Rath and Bagur separate it from Guzerat, contains the small provinces of Chanderry, Kycheewarra, and Aheerwara. This limit to the Eastward does not correspond with that assigned by Abul Fazel, who computes the breadth of the soobah from Gurrah to Banswarra at two hundred and forty-five coss*: a distance which compels us to conclude, that, of three Gurrahs in this quarter, that termed Gurrah Mundelah, or Gurrah Jubbulpoor, is the one alluded to. The circumstance of this last district, which, like Nemauro, lies along the Nerbudda below the Vindhya range, having several countries between it and the plains of Malwa little connected with the latter, and whose inhabitants speak a different dialect, is no reason why these lands should not have been included in the soobah of that name, as constituted under the Delhi government. But there appears every reason to believe, that Malwa was originally bounded by the hilly tract already no-

* The Coss is, in general, estimated at forty-two to the degree, but its length differs in almost every province of India. It may be computed as never under a mile and a half, and never (except in that introduced by the mandate of the late Tippoo Sultan in Mysore) more than two miles.

ticed, which, touching Narwar on the North, connects it with Harrowtee and the Chittore range, and joins on the South-east the Vindhya mountains, which, throughout, form the most marked of all the natural boundaries of the province

CHAPTER II

History of Malwa

THE history of Malwa is involved in darkness and fable. Oojem, which may still, from its superior magnitude, be deemed the capital of this province, has perhaps more undoubted claims to remote antiquity than any inhabited city in India; it being not only mentioned in the sacred volumes of the Hindus, but in the Periplus of the Erythrean sea, and by Ptolemy. We find, in Indian manuscripts, Malwa noticed as a separate province eight hundred and fifty years before the Christian æra, when Dunjee, to whom a divine origin* is given, restored the power of the Brahmmins, which, it is stated, had been destroyed by the Buddhists, many remains of whose religion are still to be found in this part of India. In the excavation of a mountain near Baug, we trace, both in the form of the temples, and in that of the figures and

* This tale is supposed by some to refer to his being one of the Soorujbuns, or Solar race, but most accounts deem Dunjee a Bheel, and there can be no doubt that degraded race enjoyed power in this part of the country at a very remote period

symbols which they contain, the peculiar characteristics of the Buddhist * worship

According to Hindu records, the family of Dunjee had reigned three hundred and eighty-seven years, when Putraj, the fifth in descent, dying without issue, Adut Puar (a Rajpoot † prince) ascended the throne, establishing the Puar ‡ dynasty, which continued upwards of one thousand and fifty-eight years to rule over Malwa

During the period that Dunjee's family held Malwa, we find no particular mention of them until about seven hundred and thirty years before Christ, when Dunjee's successor is said to have shaken off his dependence on the sovereign of Delhi We lose even these indistinct traces of Malwa after the above period, till near our own

* The principal Buddha is not so old as eight centuries before Christ, his age has been accurately ascertained, by coincident astronomical calculations, to be about five centuries and a half before Christ (vide Asiatic Researches) There are, however, strong reasons for conjecturing, that there were several Buddhas, often confounded with each other, the first, about one thousand years before Christ, the second about five hundred and fifty years before Christ, and a third about two hundred and fifty years after Christ

† Rajpoot, literally son of a Raja or prince, is the generic name for one of the first and most numerous classes, who are called Khetri, or the military, and form the second of the four castes into which the Hindus are divided

‡ Puar is the distinguishing name of a Rajpoot family, or clan, still numerous in Malwa

æra, when Vicramaditya, a prince whom all Hindu authors agree in describing as the encourager of learning and the arts*, obtained sovereignty. According to the Hindu authorities, Vicramaditya had no estate assigned him by his father, and lived for a considerable time with his illegitimate brother Bhurtree at Oojem, the capital of the kingdom of Malwa, of which Bhurtree was governor. A quarrel, however, arising between the brothers, Vicramaditya left Oojem, and travelled for a considerable period in great poverty over Guzerat and other parts of India. On his return to Malwa, he found that his brother, disgusted at the infidelity of his wife, had resigned all worldly concerns, and become a religious mendicant. He therefore assumed charge of the province, and from that period commenced a career which led to the establishment of his power over the greatest part of India. He is said to have restored the Hindu monarchy to that splendour which it had lost in consequence of a succession of weak monarchs, whose characters had encouraged the governors of distant provinces to rebel, and to form the territories committed to

* We owe to Vicramaditya, or, by corruption, Vicrama-jeet, the æra known by his name, and which is at this day in general use over a great part of India. It is computed, like the Christian æra, by the solar year, and commences fifty-six years before Christ. Vide Asiatic Researches, vol. 1. p. 144.

their charge into independent states. But this account of Vicramaditya has as yet been supported by no substantial proof, though we must conclude, from his great name and reputation over all India, that his power was very extended

Of the successors of Vicramaditya, nothing occurs worthy of notice till the eleventh in descent, the celebrated Raja Bhoj*, whose name stands high in Hindu traditions This prince changed

* The history of Bhoj is, like that of Vicramaditya, blended with fable He is stated to have vowed, in expiation of the sacrifice made by his mother, of her own life, to give him birth, to erect mounds to arrest the streams of nine rivers and ninety-nine rivulets He discovered a district in his territories singularly calculated to facilitate the performance of this vow, and by building a great mound between two hills, which arrested the current of nine rivers and ninety-eight lesser streams, he formed the whole into a great lake The mound said to have been made by him, was subsequently destroyed, and the streams (among which is the Betwa) allowed to pursue their courses The space of country which was covered with water is asserted to be the modern district of Tal, or the Lake, and it is one of the most fruitful and populous in the principality of Bhopal Bhojpoor, once a great city, and situated near the ruins of the mound, is at this moment only a large village, but it still bears its former name, and the ruins of many buildings and temples attest its antiquity The remaining (ninety-ninth) stream was, according to the above legend, dammed by the minister of Raja Bhoj, whose name, Bhopal, was given to a village built near the dam that forms the lake, on the bank of which the present city of Bhopal is situated

the seat of government from Oojcin to Dhar, where it continued till transferred to Mandoo by the Mahomedan conquerors of Malwa

On the death of Jey Chund, who succeeded Raja Bhoj, none of the Puars being deemed worthy of the crown, it was placed on the head of Jeetpal, a Rajpoot chief*, who established the Towur dynasty†, which lasted one hundred and forty-two years. It was succeeded by that of the Chowans‡, which began in the person of Jugdeo, and lasted one hundred and sixty-seven years. The fourth of this dynasty, Raja Basdeo, assumed imperial titles, and, we are informed, carried the arts to great perfection, and in every respect increased the fame and prosperity of his country.

During the reign of Maldeo, the last of this dynasty (and we may almost say of the Hindu princes of Malwa), part of the province was seized

* This chief is termed in the manuscript from which I write, a Zemindar, or landholder, according to the literal translation of the word, but this term has been very generally used by Mahomedan writers to designate the officer who presides over the Revenue Collectors of a province, whose situation is, from Hindu usage, hereditary, and who, being of the class of Zemindars, or landholders, is, by distinction, called "the Landholder, or Zemindar, of his Native province"

† This dynasty was called Towur from the name of the family, or rather clan of Rajpoots, to which they belonged

‡ The Chowan Rajpoots are to this day one of the highest and most powerful of the military tribes of Malwa

by Aunundeo, a chief of the tribe of Vaisya* But on the death of the former, not only Malwa, but a great part of the Delhi empire, fell under the Mahomedan dominion

In the conclusion of this short view of the first princes of Malwa, it is to be remarked, that all accounts, written or traditionary, combine to prove that it was a dependency of the Hindu empire of Delhi, though, like other divisions of the empire, its princes frequently assumed sovereign power, and maintained it through several generations

It would be alike useless and tedious to trace minutely the history of Malwa for a long period after the first Mahomedan conquest, which exhibits nothing but a series of troubles, in which this province almost lost its rank as a distinct division of ancient India † Its boundaries, subsequently to this date, varied with the success of its several usurpers One fact, however, appears clear, that the country was only partially subdued We find Hindu princes and chiefs, in almost every district, opposing the progress of the invaders, and often

* The tribe of Vaisya is the third of the four castes of the Hindus, and their allotted occupation is trade, but this is one of many instances of individuals stepping out of their prescribed limits

† Malwa, we are told by Ferishta, was one of the fifty kingdoms into which India was divided at the earliest period of Hindu government

with such success* as to establish dynasties of three or four generations, who ruled over a considerable part of the country. These revolutions continued to be frequent till the more complete conquest of Bahadur Shah, which took place during the reign of Shah Udeen of Delhi, who put that leader to death, and appointed to the government of Malwa Dilawur Khan Ghoree; who, taking advantage of the flight of Mahomed Toghlucluck, and the confusion into which India was thrown by the invasion of Timur, assumed the titles and ensigns of royalty. He fixed his capital at the city of Dhar, which still presents, in the ruins with which it is surrounded, the history of this change. The materials of its finest temples appear to have been appropriated to build palaces and mosques† for its new sovereign. This city did not, however, long remain the capital of the Mahomedans. Alif Khan (the son of Dilawur Khan), who became celebrated under the name of Hoshung Shah, removed the seat of government to Mandoo‡

* Kummur Udeen, the second in descent from Shaikh Shah Ghiznee, who first invaded the province, was slain by Cheetpal, a chief of the race of Maldeo.

† I took, when last at Dhar, a fine polished stone tablet of large dimensions, on which there was a Hindu inscription, from a ruined mosque, where this sacred writing had been placed as the floor of the Munbur (pulpit) of the Mahomedan place of worship.

‡ Ferishta

Mandoo lies nearly South-east, at a distance of fifteen miles from Dhar, and had been irregularly fortified, according to the Hindu accounts, by a prince of the name of Jey Singh Deo*, but we never find it mentioned as a capital, and, though it was before inhabited, we may refer its origin, as a place of any importance, to Hoshung Shah, on whose death it became the seat of government of his family.

The site of Mandoo was very inviting The space chosen by Hoshung Shah for his future capital is thirty-seven miles in circumference It extends along the crest of the Vindhya† range

* This prince, according to Hindu fable, was assisted in accomplishing his work by the possession of the Parus Putthur, or philosopher's stone, which was found during his reign by a grass-cutter Its properties were discovered by a blacksmith, who carried it to Jey Singh Deo, who after using it to make gold enough to defray the expense of building Mandoo, is said to have given it to the priest of his family, who, displeased at receiving a stone, threw it, before its value was explained to him, into the Nerbudda When sensible of what he had done, he sprang into the river, in the vain hope of recovering it, but his efforts to reach the bottom were in vain Credulous Hindus believe that at the place where this occurred, the Nerbudda became and continues to be unfathomable

† The Vindhya range of mountains have been described in the preceding chapter They may be termed, in every part where they touch this province, the South-western wall of Malwa These mountains, which are called Vindian by the Greeks, are mentioned in the sacred volumes of the

about eight miles, and is parted from the table-land of Malwa, with which it is upon a level, by an abrupt and rugged valley of unequal depth, but nowhere less than two hundred feet, and generally from three to four hundred yards in breadth. On the brink of this valley, (which, after rounding the city, descends in the form of wide and rugged ravines to the lower country, both to the East and West,) and on the summit of the ridge of the Vindhya mountains, which form the Southern face of Mandoo, a wall of considerable height was built, which, added to the natural strength of the ground, made it unassailable by any but regular attack; and this advantage, which gave security to property, combined with the salubrity of the air, abundance of water, and the rich nature of the ground that was encircled within the limits of the new capital, caused it early to attain a state of great prosperity.

Hoshung Shah, though his reign commenced in adversity*, afterwards acquired great fame. He engaged in hostilities with the princes South of the Nerbudda; and to facilitate operations against the Hindu Prince of Gondwarra†, he built a town

Hindus under the name here given. Vide Sir Wm Jones's Works, vol. 1, p. 23.

* He was made prisoner by the Prince of Guzerat, almost immediately after he ascended the throne.

† Gondwarra means, literally, the country of the Gonds, a low tribe of Hindus, who at no remote period possessed

and fort on the left bank of the Nerbudda, to which he gave his own* name This involved him in hostilities with the Mahomedan kings of the Bahminian† dynasty, which were attended with various fortune, but he was ultimately successful He defeated and slew Nursingh, the ruler of Gondwaria, and took his rich capital of Kirlah, which with the adjoining country remained in his A possession Hoshung died immediately after this success, having reigned thirty years His remains were brought from Hoshungabad to his new capital of Mandoo, and the noble mausoleum which was erected over them, is still in excellent preservation

Hoshung Ghoree was succeeded by his son (Ghiznee Khan‡), a weak and dissolute sovereign This prince was dethroned by his minister Ma- A homed Khiljee, whose conduct, after he attained power, redeemed the crime of usurpation It was

almost the whole of that country to the South east of the Nerbudda, which before the war of A D 1818 formed the extended dominions of the Mahratta Prince of Nagpoor

* Hoshungabad, commonly, but improperly called Husingabad

† This was one of those dynasties established in the Deckan For a particular account of them, vide Scott's Deckan, vol 1

‡ In the Ayeen Akbery this prince is called Hussein Khan, and is said to have been imprisoned by his successor Mahomed Khiljee.

to this prince that Mandoo owed its fame and splendour, and the magnificent tomb over Hoshung Shah, and the college and palaces that he built, give testimony of his respect for the memory of his benefactor, and of a regard and consideration for his subjects, which entitle him to the high reputation he has attained among the Mahomedan princes of India His reign, which lasted thirty-four years, appears, from Ferishta's account, to have been a scene of constant action His life was passed in camp; but with the exception of the invasion of Malwa by Ahmed Shah, monarch of Guzerat, the operations of Mahomed Khiljee were beyond the limits of his own kingdom, the subjects of which enjoyed a prosperity and repose proportioned to the activity and energy of their warlike prince Though living almost always in the field, his taste and magnificence adorned and enriched every part of his territories, and, besides the monuments of his splendour which have been already noticed, there are ruins of many palaces* built by him at Nalcha, a town beautifully situated six miles North of Mandoo, on the verge of

* I fitted up one of these old palaces for a residence during the hot weather it was not only necessary to clear away the bushes and briars with which its rooms were overgrown, but a tigress and two cubs were driven off by the workmen, from the den into which they had converted one of the subterranean chambers of this once proud palace of kings

the rich open country which here approaches those mountains and great ravines, by which the site of that capital has been described as bounded and defended

Ferishta* dwells with delight on the character of this prince, who was, he observes, "polite, brave, just, and learned" Hindus and Mahomedans, he describes as alike happy under his reign, and it was his policy to unite them in the ties of concord and amity His chief pleasure was to hear read the histories of former times, but particularly the biography of great and distinguished men "The useful knowledge, however, of those among whom he lived, was (the historian concludes) that in which he had the most pride, and in which he most excelled"

There can be little doubt from concurring testimonies, that it was under the government of Mahomed Khiljee, that Malwa reached its highest prosperity as a kingdom But this prince, nevertheless, experienced during a life of constant action, some very serious reverses He had at one time lost his throne, through a conspiracy of his nobles, but was reseatd upon it by the aid of

* An account of the kings of Mandoo is to be found in several works I believe that there is none more authentic than Ferishta, though other authors give a fuller detail of their actions, particularly the writer of the Maasur ul Omrah, or "The remains of the Nobles," a book of merited reputation

Sultan Moozuffei of Guzerat On another occasion, he was taken prisoner by Khoombhoo Rana of Chittore, who generously restored him to liberty and dominion We find the cities of Chanderee, Islamabad, Hoshungabad, and Kirlah, described within the limits of his territories, which were bounded to the South by the Satpooia range, extended West to the frontier of Guzerat, and East to Bundelcund His authority was established in a Northerly direction, to Mewai and Harrowtee; and we read of this prince levying tribute on the Rajpoot princes of Chittore, Kumulnere, and others, by marching at different periods an army into their countries to make collections But it appears from all the historians and records of that time, especially those of the Hindus, that some of the Rajpoot princes, particularly the Ranas of Chittore, maintained a very arduous struggle with their Mahomedan neighbours, over whom they gained many and important victories

The resources of Mahomed Khiljee may in some degree be estimated by his great expenditure on public edifices, and the large army he maintained Ferishta states, that he invaded Guzerat with an army of one hundred thousand men This is probably exaggerated, but, even admitting it, his disbursements appear so disproportioned to what the revenues of his actual territory could have supported, that we must conclude, that his

treasury was annually replenished by his foreign expeditions, and that, like many other warlike sovereigns, while he was considered by his own subjects as a just and powerful protector, he was viewed by the inhabitants of neighbouring countries as a plundering invader and oppressor

Gheass Udeen Khiljee, the son and successor of A D Mahomed Khiljee, is represented as being (though brought up to share the toils and glory of his father) early satiated with power and dominion. He committed the cares of government to others, devoting himself to sensual pleasures. His palace at Mandoo is said to have contained five hundred beautiful women, whose numbers have been exaggerated by some writers to three times that amount. This prince reigned thirty-three years, and it is a remarkable proof of the energy and wisdom of his father's government, that a kingdom like Malwa, surrounded with turbulent neighbours, suffered no diminution of territory under his indolent and luxurious successor

The life of Gheass Udeen was, according to some writers, terminated by his son Noorudeen. This fact is questioned, and treated as improbable by Ferishta. But the record which that historian gives of the reign of this prince, is not calculated to disprove the accusation. Though active and brave, he appears to have been the slave of his passions, and Hindus and Mahomedans were alike disgusted by the indecent scenes of his debauchery,

and his death (which happened after a reign of eleven years) was caused by using the cold bath, when in a fever from excessive drinking

That Noorudeen, with all his vices, left the wealth and splendour of his kingdom unimpaired to his son Mahmood, is proved by one fact: according to respectable writers, seven hundred elephants in velvet housings walked at the coronation ceremony of the young prince through the streets of Mandoo

The peace of the reign of Mahmood was disturbed by the intrigues of his brothers, one of whom* seized upon Chanderee. To suppress these rebellions in his family, he had recourse to the aid of the Rajpoot or Hindu soldiers of his kingdom, and, according to Mahomedan authority, he delivered over the defence of his person and dominions to his minister Maderay Roy, who was of that tribe. But he soon became sensible of his error, and endeavoured to repair it by the discharge of a great part of his army. This, however, created first a mutiny, and afterwards hostilities between the Rajpoots and the Mahomedans; from the dangers of which Mahmood escaped, by

* This chief, Bâber observes in his Institutes, was encouraged and supported by Sultan Secunder and Sultan Ibrahim at Delhi, and the latter, when Mahmood Shah died, displaced his son, and put one of his own officers in charge of Chanderee, which was taken from him by the Rana of Chittore

flying to Guzerat, the reigning monarch * of which received him with open arms. An army marched to restore the royal fugitive, which succeeded, after a siege of several months, in taking Mandoo by storm. Nineteen thousand Rajpoots (including those who sacrificed themselves rather than survive defeat) are stated to have fallen on this memorable occasion. The monarch of Guzerat returned to his own territories, leaving three thousand of his cavalry to aid Mahmood in the wars he had to undertake against those Hindus, whom his unwise confidence had placed in possession of every strong hold in his kingdom.

There are good grounds to conclude that the above statement is not quite correct, and that Mahomedan authors have referred those misfortunes to treachery and family discord, which had their chief source in the valour and ability of Rana Sunka, prince of Chittore, and at this period the acknowledged head of the Rajpoots. The Emperor Bâber, in his Memoirs of his own time, mentions the victories of this celebrated Hindu prince over Shah Mahmood, and states that he took from him a number of provinces. Bâber specifies among

* Moozuffer Shah, King of Guzerat, is said to have desired to use Mahmood as an instrument of his ambition, but he was not the only Mahomedan prince who aided that monarch. The troops of the Prince of Candesh, and several other Mahomedan chiefs, joined to overthrow the supremacy which the Hindus had established in Malwa.

those, Rathgurl, Sarungpooi, Bhulsa, and Chanderee. The royal author, in a subsequent passage, relating his own conquests, mentions his having taken the latter city from the Rajpoot prince "In the year of the Hejra 934, (he observes) "through the Divine favour, I took in a few hours "Chanderee by storm. It was commanded by "Maderay Roy, one of the highest and most distinguished of Rana Sunka's officers. I slew all "the infidels, and from the city of hostility which "it had long been, I converted it into the city of "the Faith." The fact appears to be, that in the decline of the Khuljee dynasty, the Rajpoots made a strenuous effort to recover that sovereignty which they had lost over Malwa, and were alone prevented from accomplishing the object by the rising fortune of the new dynasty of the sovereigns of Delhi.

Mahmood Shah had made some progress in the reestablishment of his power, when he unfortunately gave protection to the fugitive brother of Bahadur Shah, King of Guzerat, and provoked, by this imprudence, the attack of that monarch, which terminated in his death and the destruction of his family. Mandoo was taken by Bahadur Shah; the unfortunate Mahmood was sent, with his wives and children, to be confined in the fortress of Powaigurh; and on an attempt being made to release him, he was put to death at the town of Dohud, where he is interred.

From the occurrence of the above event to the conquest of Malwa by the emperors of Delhi (a period of thirty-seven years) that province was a scene of successive revolutions. Bahadur Shah was expelled by Humayoon: but on the flight of the latter to Persia, Mulloo Khan, an officer of A D 1536 the Khiljee government, succeeded in obliging the imperial officers to abandon a great part of the kingdom, of which he was crowned king at Mandoo, under the title of Sultan Kauder Malwy. By the latter appellation, which designated him as an inhabitant of Malwa, it was probably his wish to obtain the aid of those feelings of pride, which might lead natives of the province to assert its right of independence. He was, however, compelled to seek refuge in Guzerat, when attacked A D 1542 by the Emperor Sheer Shah, who placed Shujal Khan, an officer of high rank and character, in the government of Malwa. This Omrah (who among other monuments of his magnificence has left the city of Shujahalpoor, which he founded) was succeeded by his son Mullee Bayized, who afterwards A D 1555 assumed the title of Baz Bahadur, and established for a short period an independent power. Though a brave soldier, he appears to have given himself over to indolence, and to the indulgence of pleasure. His love for Roop Muttee *, a Hindu

* This celebrated female was a dancing-girl of Saharunpoor. She was even more famed for her sense and accom-

HISTORY OF MALWA

beauty, was carried to great excess, and led to many acts of extravagant folly, which are still commemorated in popular tales and songs. But Baz Bahadur was roused from such dreams of enjoyment by the arrival of an army from Delhi. He fled to the governor of Asseer, and with his aid, and that of the Mahomedan prince of Beiar, he obtained some advantages over the imperial troops, the general of which was forced, in his turn, to retreat. This success, however, was of short duration: another army from Delhi drove him from his country; and its subsequent invasion by Akber in person, put a complete end to the contest. Malwa was annihilated as a separate kingdom, and reduced to the condition of a province, in which it remained, subjected to the same changes and revolutions that affected the other divisions of the empire, till it was conquered by the Mahrattas.

The Mahomedan monarchs of Malwa attained, at one period, a very considerable degree of power. From their coins, of which there are numbers to be obtained, they appear to have assumed all those proud and pompous titles which it is the usage of Mahomedan princes to do. It is not easy, at so remote a period, to judge with accuracy even the general character of their government; but the

plishments than her beauty. There are the remains of a splendid palace in Mandoo, built by her royal lover for the residence of this favourite.

magnificent ruins of Mandoo*, and the numerous remains of towns and villages on spots now desolate, prove that this province must, under their sway,

* It has been already mentioned that the walls of this noble city were in extent thirty-seven miles I obtained part of the records of the zemindars of this city, and the following is, according to one of the oldest papers of this collection, an account taken by measurement of the contents of the whole of the ground within this circumference The document is rendered more curious, from giving the exact dimensions occupied by buildings, as well as by baths, tanks, rivers, mountains, and cultivations, and thereby enabling us to judge with tolerable correctness of the degree of splendour it had obtained

The following is the detail of square Begahs within the

Fort of Mandoo	Begahs
Nemazur,	2555
Baths,	400
Small Hills or Ridges,	2350
Gardens or Orchards,	363
Mosques,	705
Wells, large and small,	310
King's Palaces,	500
Caravansaries or Serais	305
The Laul Bag, a royal Garden or Pleasure Ground,	200
Twelve Bazar Roads,	147
Tagur Tallau (a great Tank or reservoir,)	910
Small Tanks,	263
Inhabited,	2258
Cultivated,	845
Enams grant to Zemindar,	125

Begahs 11,416

But the Poran or suburbs of Jaumnea, Huneice, and

have attained very great prosperity There is one fact, however, certain, that they never completely subdued the Rajpoot princes and petty chiefs in their vicinity, and indeed within the precincts of their kingdom. The bravest and wisest of the princes of this race seem to have pursued the policy of the emperors of Delhi, in regard to these valiant Hindus—to have been content with nominal submission, a moderate tribute, and occasional military service This is proved from the condition in which the Rajpoot chiefs appeared, whenever invited or provoked to opposition, by the weakness or wickedness of their Mahomedan superiors

A full account of the Rajpoots, who form so great a part of the population of Malwa, will be given hereafter, suffice it to say, many of the tribes in that province boast their descent from the celestial Rámachandra, and are consequently termed the children of the Sun; while others trace to

Nandlah, were within the walls, and, as they occupied a space of 2258 Begahs, this added to the above, made the total contents within the limits of this capital 13,674 Begahs of ground, besides the walls, which occupied 2838 Begahs, to which add Soneghur, containing 500 Begahs, would make the whole contents within the defences of this city 17,012 Begahs This, computing the Malwa Begah at its present measurement of a square of sixty yards to the begah, makes the contents of the ground encircled by the walls of Mandoo about 12,654 English acres

Pooravisee, and deem themselves descendants of the Moon. Some writers, however, deny their title even to the rank of Khetri*, that race being, according to them, extinct in this yug or age, but the power the Rajpoots have long enjoyed, has obtained them the highest estimation. They were, to use a metaphorical and flattering phrase of their countrymen, the sword of the Hindu faith. It was not easy to subdue such men; for, though broken by their own dissensions, before and after the Mahomedan invasion, into a thousand petty states, almost every one of which was an object of contest between brothers, yet still every individual was a soldier, who preferred death to disgrace, and though ready to be the servant, scorned to be the slave of any monarch upon earth. They were taught their duties from their most sacred works. In one, the demigod Krishna†, speaking to Arjoon, observes, “A soldier of the Khetri tribe hath no “superior duty to fighting. Soldier, who art the “favourite of God, engage in such a battle as this : “if thou art slain, thou wilt obtain heaven; if victorious, thou wilt enjoy a world !”

The government established by the Mahomedan conquerors of India, was not of a character calculated to subdue the spirit of the Rajpoots, had it been its policy to do so, but it was not : that jea-

* Cshatriya

† The Bhágavad Geeta

lousy of their own instruments of success which ever accompanies despotic sovereigns, led the first emperors to court into their service this class of Hindus, as a check upon their turbulent soldiers or ambitious Omrahs. The yoke was made light to the Rajas of this tribe: they were treated as the first princes of the empire, and not only their relations, but many of their adherents were raised to rank, honour, and wealth. The concord which such treatment produced was often disturbed, and we find some sanguinary contests between the first Mahomedan monarchs and the Rajpoots. Still the occurrence of rebellion in one of this race was much more rare than that of the Mahomedan Omrahs; and in their willing allegiance to the house of Timur, some of the proudest of the Rajpoot princes so far forgot their religion and usages, and were so enervated by the luxury, and dazzled with the pomp and power still left to them, as not only to consent, but to deem it an honour for their daughters* to enter the Imperial Harem. Their principal claim, however, to the favour of their

* This act is nevertheless considered by Hindu writers as a disgrace, and I find in an original manuscript of the late Jey Singh Kychee, a boast that one of his ancestors suffered the greatest distress rather than give his consent to the degrading usage. It is also the boast of the Rana of Odeypoor, the highest of all the families of this tribe, that there never was an intermarriage with one of that house and a Moghul prince.

Mahomedan sovereigns, was the character they upheld as brave and faithful soldiers. This gave to Hindu princes and chiefs, office and authority in different parts of the empire, and their services were usually rewarded with grants of land. To this source may be traced the establishment of some of the principal families in Malwa, many of which were also aided by the influence of the Rajas of Jeypoor, Joudpooi, and Odeypoor*, with one or other of which they are almost all connected.

To shew the character of the internal government of Malwa when the Mahrattas invaded that province, it will be useful to notice some of the predecessors of the Hindu chiefs, and we cannot select better examples than the petty rulers of Ragooguh, Jabooah, and Rutlam. The Rajas of Ragooguh are of the Kychee tribe of Rajpoots, and boast a proud descent from Pirthee Raj†, of

* The Princes of Odeypoor are in the early part of the history of Malwa termed Rulers of Chittore—which was the name by which they were known till that celebrated fortress was taken by the Emperor Akber, in A D 1567, and ceased to be their capital.

† Pirthee Raja fills a large space in Hindu Chronicles, and his exploits as the sovereign and leader of the Hindus against the Mahomedan invaders of India are a constant and favourite theme of the bards of his tribe. Nor is his fame trusted to tradition alone, several poems have been written upon this monarch, and one of these, the production of a bard who accompanied him in all his actions, is said not only to possess

HISTORY OF MALWA

Delhi They were first settled at Gungiaur* in Malwa; but they appear to have had little power or consequence until Ghureeb Doss, one of their ancestors, distinguished himself in the service of Akber, who appointed him to the government of Mooltan, and, in reward for his good conduct, bestowed upon him Seronge and other lands in its vicinity, as a Jahgeer, or hereditary estate. The son of this chief, Laljee, was the founder of Ra-googurh, which became their capital; and his grandson, Bulbudder Singh, a man of reputation and influence, was Raja of that place when the Mahrattas first invaded Malwa.

The Jabooah Rajas, though their present representative is of spurious birth, claim in their pedigree a direct descent from the Rhattore princes of Joudpooi, and the high birth and character of some of this family appear to have early recommended them to the service of the Moghul emperors. Bhunjee commanded four hundred horse at Delhi, and his son Kishen Doss was placed in attendance on the prince Allah Udeen, upon whose accession to the throne he became a great favourite. The service he rendered his master in reconquering the possession of Dacca, which had

much merit as a poem, but to contain many historical facts, and it is, to my knowledge, continually referred to by Rajpoot chiefs of the present day, as containing what they deem undoubted facts as to the achievements of their ancestors.

* In this fortress they resisted the arms of the Emperor Secunder for twelve years.

been seized by a rebellious governor, was repaid by a grant of five villages in Hindustan, and ten districts in Malwa. He had been settled but a few years in this province when events led to a considerable increase of fortune. he received orders from Delhi to avenge the murder of the family and a number of the followers of a governor of Guzerat, who were plundered and slain by Suka Naick, the Bheel ruler of Jabooah, and Chunderbahn, the Rajpoot chief of Dholitah. What force alone could never have effected against these notorious freebooters, who, strong in their inaccessible country, had long defied all regular attacks, was accomplished by the combined art and courage of Kishen Doss. He assumed the disguise of a horse-dealer from Guzerat, went to Jabooah, and, after selling some remarkably fine horses at low prices to the chief, proposed, upon the ground of pretended gratitude, to give him a feast. The invitation was accepted, the usual excesses took place, and Suka Naick, and all his principal adherents, were put to death, and their strong hold taken. The return made by his sovereign was a grant of the possessions of Jabooah, and a subsequent present of royal ensigns, and high titles, which gave him a proud rank among the Hindu chiefs of Malwa. This family remained, with the common revolutions of such petty states, till the invasion of the Mahrattas. Before that period, however, it had separated into

several small principalities (of which Amjherra was one), owing to a mode usual among this race, of alienating districts for the support of younger branches of the family

Ruttun Singh, son of Mohun Doss, a prince descended from the Joudpoor family, gained by his address and gallantry, the good opinion of the Emperor Shah Jehan, so much that he gave him a grant of Rutlam*, Sillanah, and other districts in their vicinity. This prince fell near Oojem, where his loyalty led him to encounter the army of Aurungzeeb†, when the latter rebelled against his father. The fidelity of Ruttun Singh was rewarded by Shah Jehan, who gave those lands, which had only been before a Jaidad, or grant for military service, in free gift to his posterity.

This family remained in possession of their principality till the invasion of the Mahrattas; but, according to the usage of the Rajpoots, several districts were alienated, to provide for the younger sons; and the Rajas of Seeta Mhow, of Sillanah, of Kachee Barode, and Mooltan, are all descendants of Ruttun Singh: the elder brother of the family continuing to rule over the town and fine province of Rutlam, and to receive a general obedience and respect from the junior branches

* It is asserted that he founded the present capital of the district. He probably raised it from a village to a town by making it the place of his residence.

† Bernier gives a particular account of this action

These instances (and there are many similar) will suffice to shew the nature and foundation of that power and influence which a number of Rajpoot chiefs possessed in Malwa. The causes which led to the defection of some of this powerful tribe from the house of Timur, to which they had long yielded obedience, are easily traced. The example of that toleration and liberal indulgence which Akber extended to his Hindu subjects, was followed by his immediate successors; but the spirit of a religion established by the sword, one of whose first tenets enjoined conversion, death, or heavy tribute to infidels, and above all to the worshippers of idols, ill accorded with a policy that was grounded on maxims which made no distinction between the latter and the faithful. This feeling shewed itself on the occurrence of wars or disputes with the Hindus; but, while the sovereign himself was free from bigotry, its action was very limited. The Emperor Jehangeeer shewed no preference to any religion. His son Shah Jehan, in his earlier years, evinced similar sentiments, and when in mature age he became an attentive observer of the forms, if not a true believer in the tenets, of the Mahomedan faith, he continued (with one casual deviation) his wonted toleration to his subjects. The eldest son of this monarch, the celebrated and unfortunate Dara, wrote a work, the object of which was, to reconcile the tenets of Mahomed and Brahma, and his brothers appear to

have been as far removed from bigotry as himself, with the exception of Aurungzeeb, a prince whose attainment and exercise of power present perhaps as many lessons as the life of any monarch that ever reigned. Without presuming to strike the balance between his good and bad actions, or to decide whether he had a just claim to his great reputation, or was, throughout his long reign, an actor, and, with every artificial accomplishment for the great scene in which fortune had placed him, deficient in that strength which belongs alone to him who plays a natural part, we may pronounce, on the ground of the measures he adopted to promote his ambitious views, that his early professions of zeal for the faith of Mahomet were merely meant to increase the number of his adherents, by placing his conduct on this essential point in strong contrast with that of his brothers and rivals for imperial power. That Aurungzeeb was solely governed, in his contests with them, by worldly considerations, is proved by one fact. That affected, unforgetting, and ungovernable zeal which was pleaded as his excuse for unbruising his hands in the blood of the gallant and generous Dara, was forgotten the moment that crime had secured him the throne, and the completest indulgence was granted to all his idolatrous subjects, whom we find, in the first years of his reign, as much, if not more favoured than Mahomedans. This also was, no doubt, the result of policy.

But a narrow policy, which looked for expedients to remedy every evil, was not sufficient to save the family of Timur from that ruin with which it was now threatened. Its power could alone have been preserved by a firmness and wisdom founded on true virtue and greatness of mind, which disdained a temporary advantage, however alluring, that was to be gained by a departure from principles essential to the general interests of the empire. How opposite was the conduct of Aurungzeeb. Irritation at the successful depredations of the Mahrattas,—the suspicion of these freebooters enjoying the good wishes, if not the secret aid of others,—or a spirit of bigotry, perhaps sincere, but more probably assumed, to revive the attachment of the Mahomedans, led him to attempt, by the most unjustifiable means, the conversion of the whole of his Hindu subjects. Few yielded to his persuasion or threats; but the remainder were visited, as a punishment for their obstinacy, with the extortion of heavy taxes and fines. The produce of these impositions was expected to be immense. The public revenue had greatly decayed in the reign of Aurungzeeb, and the mean motive of desiring to fill his treasury, has been imputed to this sovereign, as the ground of a measure, which, even unsuccessful as it was (for it could not be carried into full effect), lost him the good will and attachment of a great majority of his subjects. The chief historical record that has been pre-

served, connected with this transaction, is the bold and animated appeal made by Jeswunt Singh, Raja of Joudpoor, in his letter to the Emperor* After recalling to his memory the opposite conduct of Akber, of Jehangeer, and his father Shah Jehan, and reprobating the attempt to collect a revenue upon the consciences of men, or to vex the devotee and anchoiet with a tax upon his belief, the Hindu prince observes, “ If your Majesty places any faith
 “ in those books by distinction called divine, you
 “ will there be instructed that God is the God of
 “ all mankind, not of Mahomedans alone. The
 “ Pagan and Musulman are equal in his pre-
 “ sence, distinctions of colour are of his ordina-
 “ tion It is he who gives existence In your
 “ temples it is in his name that the voice calls to
 “ prayer; in the house of images, the bell is
 “ shaken.—still he is the object of our adoration
 “ To vilify, therefore, the religion, or the customs
 “ of other men, is to set at nought the pleasure of
 “ the Almighty ”

Such were the sentiments that became general amongst all the Hindus, whose international disputes were forgotten, in a sense of the danger which threatened their common faith The error

* There are many translations of this letter, of which the original, as well as a very literal translation, will be found in the Asiatic Miscellany

he had committed, could not be retrieved by Aurungzeeb, and to the feeling of indignation which his conduct had kindled, was added that of contempt for the authority of his weak successors. Existing rule is always in some degree unpopular. for it seems to be a law in the moral as well as the physical world, that pressure should produce resistance and reaction. But here there were more than common motives. The Hindu princes, subject to the throne of Delhi, while they were almost reconciled to their condition, by the indulgent kindness and toleration of their conquerors, and by a participation (for such they enjoyed) in the wealth and splendour of the empire, were deterred from rebellion, by a contemplation of the power of the descendants of Timur. At the very moment when that began to decline, and new enemies arose in every quarter, a senseless bigotry had recourse to persecution. Thus invited by weakness, and provoked by injury, we are not surprised to find, that the Rajpoot princes and chiefs of Jeypoor, Malwar, Mewar, and Malwa, so far from continuing to be the defence of the empire, were either secretly or openly the supporters of the Mahatta invaders, to whose invasion of Malwa, we are told by every Persian or Hindu writer that notices the subject, hardly any opposition was given; and we possess many testimonies to shew, that they chiefly attri-

buted their success, on this occasion, to the action of religious feeling

The celebrated Raja Jey Singh, prince of Jey-poor, greatly contributed (though, perhaps, without intending it) to the conquest of Malwa, and indeed of Hindustan, by the Mahrattas. The correspondence between this chief and the first Bajerow would, if obtained, throw light upon this period of history. It is said* to have commenced in a communication very characteristic of the times and the parties :—the ruler of the Mahratta state sent a verse of the Purana to Jey Singh, which may be literally translated—“ Thou art like the cloud
“ which drinketh the waters of the sea, and re-
“ turneth them with thunder to fertilize the earth.
“ The mountains, in dread of Indra, fly to thee
“ for protection. Thou art the tree of desires.
“ Thou art the sea whence springeth the tree of
“ desires, who can tell thy depth ! I have no
“ power to describe the depth of the ocean, but
“ in all thy actions remember Agastya Moonee ”

According to Hindu mythology, the sage

* This anecdote was communicated to me by several intelligent Mahrattas, all of whom told me they had no doubt of its authenticity. This manner of conveying their secret sentiments by the transmission of a verse from one of their holy volumes, is common with Hindu princes. The obligation claimed or made in such a mode, has a character at once mysterious and sacred.

Agastya Moonee drank up the sea* The communication, therefore, though flattering, conveyed a metaphorical, but distinct warning of what might happen if he opposed the Brahmin sway

Jey Singh's answer, taken from the same sacred volume, was as follows :

“ If the offspring of Brahma sin with me, I for-
 “ give them This pledge I hold sacred It was
 “ of no consequence that Agastya Moonee drank
 “ up the sea, but if God should doom the walls
 “ that retain the ocean to be thrown down, then
 “ the world would be destroyed, and what would
 “ become of Agastya Moonee ?”

The Hindus believe the sea to be walled in; and the allusion to the consequences of that element being let loose upon the earth, is considered, as addressed to one of the sacred offspring of Brahma, whose duty it was to preserve, instead of destroying, the general order, to be peculiarly apposite But it was the object of the proud Rajpoot, while he gave encouragement and accepted the proffered friendship, to retort the threat by warning Bajerow of the consequences that would ensue from breaking down long-established authority

These facts have importance, not merely as they

* Agastya Moonee, according to Hindu mythology, drank up the sea of milk in order to assist the gods in destroying two giants who had taken refuge there Waid, vol iv p 32

account historically, which is the chief object, for the first establishment of the Mahiattas in Malwa, the defence of which had been almost wholly committed to Rajpoots, but as they shew the effect produced by an attack upon the religion of that warlike and superstitious race of men. It led them to welcome freebooters to their homes; nor have the great miseries they have since endured, obliterated a recollection of the chief causes which led to this revolution. Sentiments of gratitude towards the emperors who honoured and favoured them, are mixed with indignation at the attempt made to alter their religion; and their bards and minstrels*, who are their only historians, still relate the oppression and injustice which overthrew their temples to establish the edifices of another faith, and raised a revenue on their belief, rendered as insulting as it was oppressive, by being levied on all their religious ceremonies, even to those performed over the dead. These national legends usually pass from their wrongs to a more animated strain, and record the fame of those heroes, who overthrew the mosques of the tyrants, which had been erected in spots sacred to their ancient deities, and restored the hallowed ground to that worship to which it had been so long dedi-

* Charuns and Bhâts. A full account of these classes, who in Malwa fill an important space in the Hindu community, will be given hereafter

cated This theme is familiar, in a degree hardly to be credited, among the Hindus of Malwa, and the strength in which the feeling exists, reconciles us to the idea that it was sufficient to make the inhabitants of this country consent to become the authors of their own ruin, in the introduction of the power of the Mahrattas, whose invasion of their country no lesser motive could have induced them to encourage and support

CHAPTER III.

Mahratta Invasion of Malwa.

THE whole of the accounts, written or published, of the early progress of the Mahrattas in Malwa, are vague and general. They can hardly be said to give more than the dates of their invasion of that province, and these are neither correct nor complete.

From the commencement of the reign of Aurungzeeb, the Mahomedan writers cease to be so minute in their details, as they are at former and most prosperous periods of the Moghul empire. The theme was not inviting, and their hostile feelings towards the Mahrattas have made them general and unfaithful narrators of the success of that people. The blank which this has left is not supplied by the Hindu writers: these, and particularly the Mahrattas, preserve no record even of their victories; they are in this respect, as in others, the slaves of usage. Short letters on family affairs, or on public events of the moment, destroyed or forgotten as soon as written, are the only efforts of the pen of common writers; while

the more learned content themselves with reading their sacred volumes* and mythological fables, or if they write, it is but in imitation (to flatter some prince or chief) of these extravagant ebullitions, never dreaming, seemingly, of embodying their nation's fame in an historical work, or even of blending that correct series of the names of their rulers, which they generally preserve, with a clear and authentic account of the principal events of each reign

The history of the Mahrattas, from the time of their great leader Sevajee†, to the battle of Paniput‡, furnished ample ground for the gratification of pride, supposing what occurred to be written in the most plain and unadorned language. Even after their defeat by the Afghans, the actions of Mulhar Row, the first chief of the Holkar family, of Madhajee Sindia, and of Nana

* Purānas

† Almost all English readers are familiar with the name of Sevajee, the founder of the Mahratta empire, who, in A D 1646, was encouraged by the weakness of the Mahomedan sect to rebel. In 1674 he declared himself independent, and when he died, in 1682, he had established his authority over the greatest part of the Concan, a country which lies between the great range of hills which bounds the Deckan on the West and the sea-coast, and is now under the Bombay government.

‡ The combined Mahratta forces were defeated at Paniput, (a village fifty miles North-west of Delhi,) by Ahmed Shah Abdallee, A D 1761

Furnavesc, merited to be preserved by their countrymen. Their deeds, however, have been almost entirely trusted to tradition, and thus by a people who are not only very generally instructed, but who are minute to a degree in all that concerns the management of the large territories which are or have been subject to their government. The Diaries* found amid the archives of Poona, only related to the revenue affairs of the empire. They are complete for the last century, and furnish a most correct record of receipts, disbursements, names of officers employed, and dates of all financial transactions.

In their first invasion of Central India, the war the Mahrattas carried on was evidently against the Government†, and not the inhabitants. They

* These Diaries are called *Roze Kurd*, a corrupt compound from the Persian, which means the Acts of the day. Mr Macleod, an assistant of the Commissioner in the Deccan, who carefully searched the records, states that these *Roze Kurds* go back as far as A. D. 1720, but are not very complete for the first ten years. He also notices two Calendars which he had found, containing the principal events of the Mahratta nation for two hundred years, but speaks of them as barren and unsatisfactory documents.

† In the course of researches for information regarding the first Mahratta invasion of Malwa, it was found that Sheo Lal, the representative of the former Zemindars of Mandoo, had preserved, when almost all other documents were lost, many of the papers relative to the districts of which his family had charge. In one of the oldest of these, which contains the Re-

appeal, at this stage of their power, to have taken a large share of the revenue, but not to have destroyed, like more barbarous invaders, the source from which it was drawn, for if they had, it could not have recovered so rapidly, as we find from revenue records that it did. But there is in the whole of the proceedings of this period, the strongest ground to conclude, that they were acting with the concurrence and aid of the Hindu chiefs of the empire, whose just reasons for discontent with the reigning monarch, Aurungzeeb, have been noticed. This fact, indeed, as far as relates to Sevaee Jey Singh, Raja of Doondar, or

venue account of Dhurmpooree for A. D. 1690, we find the revenue of that district (which lies to the North of the Nerbudda, and immediately South of Mandoo) was reduced by an incursion of the Mahrattas from the amount of eighty-one thousand and seventy-two rupees, to that of thirty-two thousand five hundred and eighty-nine rupees and nine annas. Their absence in A. D. 1691 caused the revenue of this district to amount to seventy-two thousand one hundred and thirty-nine rupees and nine annas. It rose still higher next year, amounting to eighty-nine thousand six hundred and eighty-four rupees, but a return of the Southern Plunderers, as they are termed in this revenue record, in A. D. 1694, brought it as low as thirty thousand and two rupees, while their ceasing to molest the district the ensuing year, raised it nearly to its wonted value. Documents similar to that quoted, furnish the most authentic account we can obtain of the first predatory excursions of the Mahrattas, for they do not merely give the date, but the character of the enterprise.

Jeypoor*, is distinctly stated in several contemporary† authorities

According to the authority followed, the Mahrattas continued for seven years then incursions into this part of Malwa, and only abandoned their annual attacks of the province on the advance of Sevaee Jey Singh. This celebrated Hindu soldier and statesman belonged to a family which the policy of Aurungzeeb had raised, chiefly in opposition to Jeswunt Singh, the prince of Joudpoo, to whom his hatred was as violent as it was impla-

* This great tract of country, which lies to the North of Harrowtee and Mewar, is properly called Doondar. It was, however, known better under the name of Amber, which it took from its capital, and is now called Jeypoor, from the noble city founded by Sevaee Jey Singh, which has become the residence of his successors

† In a manuscript written by an ancestor of the present Zemindar of Mandoo (which is preserved with his revenue records) it is asserted, that the Mahrattas in the year of the Hejra 1108, or A D 1696, ascended the Nalcha Ghaut, took Mandoo, and engaged the Mahomedan troops at Dhar, which fort they are stated to have reduced, after a three months' siege, by springing a mine. Two persons, named Shah Doolah and Abdallah Khan, who are termed Shah Zadahs, or princes, enjoyed at this period the government of Malwa, and it appears from a chronological list of the governors of that province taken from a Persian tract, that the Nabob Ameer Khan, who is styled Soobahdar, or governor of Malwa, was succeeded by his sons Doollah Khan and Sadoollah Khan, who were left unsupported to withstand the invaders, and, after an opposition of several months, were compelled to retire to Bhopal. According to the Hindu

cable But the friendship of this emperor was generally ominous of evil The grandfather* of Jey Singh, who had been employed successfully to check the progress of Sevajee, was first the instrument of the ambition, and afterwards the victim of the jealous fears of Aurungzeeb and though Sevaee Jey Singh professed obedience and allegiance, there is every reason to believe he maintained that secret correspondence and understanding, which all Mahomedan writers accused his ancestor of having established with the Mahrattas It is stated on a respectable Hindu authority†, that the Shahzadoo and Dhar led the Emperor by

record, Dhar capitulated, and its defenders were allowed to go where they chose, with their private property Sadoollah Khan, we find in Eradut Khan's Memoirs, was Soobahdar of Malwa in A D 1707 and this author mentions that he himself was Killahdar, or commandant, of Mandoo in that year, a proof that the incursions of the Mahrattas were merely predatory Scott, in his excellent History of the Deckan, does not notice any of these incursions On the contrary, he observes, (vol II p 79) that the expedition into Dhamoonee, a district of the Sagur province, under Bhora Krishna, in A D 1702, was the first occasion on which the Mahrattas crossed the Nerbudda, but there can be no mistake in the records I have quoted of the plundering of the Pergunnah of Dhurmpooree in the preceding note

* Jey Singh, usually distinguished from others of the same name by the appellation of Mirza Raja

† He is believed to have been poisoned by the Emperor's orders

‡ This is asserted in the manuscript memoir given me by the Zemindar of Mandoo.

their representations to doubt the fidelity of Jey Singh ; who, to contradict their assertions, volunteered to expel the invaders from Malwa His offer was accepted, and he marched against them It is believed that he secretly informed their leaders of the motives of his conduct, and solicited them to make only a show of resistance, intimating that their return, when times were more favourable, would be facilitated His wishes were obeyed, hardly any opposition was made, the Mahrattas retreated to the Deckan, and Jey Singh, after remaining six months in Malwa, returned to Hindustan

These events* are stated to have taken place in A D 1698 The invaders returned in a few years, and the standard† of Oudajee Puar was planted at Mandoo He, however, was soon compelled to retreat, and the Mahrattas for some time do not appear to have disturbed that province, till the advancement of ‡Ballajee Bishwa-

* This occurrence is not mentioned by Major Scott, but I have already noticed the character of the Mahomedan writers from whose works his history is composed In vol. ii page 107, the Mahrattas are stated to have " swarmed like " ants or locusts from the Nerbudda to the Deckan "

† The term in the manuscript from which this is taken, is Thannah, which implies a small party with a flag, put in possession of a post, village, or town

‡ Ballajee Bishwanath, the first Paishwah, was raised to his high office A D 1714, and died in April 1720

nath to the office of Paishwah who restored their power, and one of the earliest measures of his son and successor, Bajerow Bullal, was to send a strong force, commanded by Ramchunder Guneiss*, to lay waste the country, and collect tribute from the princes and government officers North of the Nerbudda

From what has been said it would appear, that though Malwa was invaded a few years before the death of Aurungzeeb, the authority of the Mah-rattas was not established in that province till the reign of Mahomed Shah. But, though no permanent arrangement, or appropriation of specific territories to the respective chieftains, was made † till A D 1732, the country was often overrun, and we find in the Poona records, that about the end of the year 1725, several officers were nominated

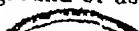
* Ramchunder Guneiss, who commanded in this expedition, was a very able man, and afterwards employed with Ranojee Sindia. He is sometimes confounded with a leader of the same name, who was of the Paishwah's tribe (a Kohun Brahmin), held the office of Beenee Wallah, or Quartermaster-general, and commanded the Paishwah's troops when these were united (A D 1773) with Madhajeo Sindia and Tukajeo Holkar in Hindustan

† It probably owed in a great degree its partial exemption, during this period, to the power and influence of Jey Singh, who, I find from the record of a settlement of disputed limits between the villages of Sagrod and Bajour on the Chumbul, was Nazim, or governor of Malwa in A D 1710-11, and probably for some years afterwards

to collect tribute, and some districts in Malwa were actually granted to favoured individuals. An expedition had been sent three years before, under Oudajee Puar, to reduce Guzerat; and we discover in the correspondence between that chief, the Sahoo Raja, and the Paishwah, that the former had orders to establish the customary Mahratta imposts* over Malwa, and orders were addressed to the different officers of each district, authorizing Oudajee to collect this part of the revenue, which was levied by him, over the greatest part of the province, two years before Bajerow Bullal entered the country with the more serious design of making it an entire conquest.

It is here necessary to interrupt the narration, to notice the principles upon which the invaders of Malwa acted, as well as to understand the character of the government they established. The contests carried on by Sevajee and his successors did not differ more from those of other nations in

* Chout was, as the term implies, the fourth of the revenue. The Sirdaismookhee (which amounted to 10 per cent on the collection) was a right of the officer called Daismookh, a name which, literally translated, means the head of the province. I cannot any where find a satisfactory account why this specific claim, usually attached to a particular family in each province, became a general one which the Mahrattas made on every country they invaded, but, from their habits, its having been claimed by and granted to one of their leaders, is a quite sufficient reason for its being exacted by all on the assumed ground of usage



the mode of warfare, than in the manner in which the army was paid, its commanders rewarded, and the different countries they invaded, were plundered, divided, and settled. Raised by the genius of Sevajee to the proud rank of being first the scourge, and afterwards the destroyer of the Mahomedan empire, the cause of the Mahrattas had, in all its early stages, the aid of religious feeling. It was a kind of Holy War, and the appearance of Brahmins at the head of their armies gave, in the first instance, force to this impression. This people have been described too generally; there cannot be more opposite characters than we meet with among them, particularly in the great classes who have shared the power of the state, the Brahmins, and soldiers of the Khetri and Sudra tribes.* The Mahratta Brahmin is, from diet, habit, and education, keen, active, and intelligent, but generally avaricious, and often treacherous. His life, if in public business, must from the system of his government, be passed in efforts to deceive, and to detect others in deceiving. Such occupations raise cunning to the

* The Paishwahs, the Southern Jahgeerdars, the principal officers of state, and chiefs who remained in the Mahratta countries South of the Taptee, were Brahmins. The Bhonslahs, who early possessed themselves of Nagpoor, the Guickwar of Guzerat, and the family of Puar, who settled in Malwa, boast a connexion with the Khetri tribe. The Sindia and Holkar families were of the Sudra

place of wisdom, and debase, by giving a mean and interested bent to the mind, all those claims to respect and attachment, upon which great and despotic power can alone have any permanent foundation

The history of the Mahratta nation abounds with instances of Brahmins rising from the lowest stations (usually that of agents *) to be ministers, and sometimes rulers, of a state, but their character undergoes little change from advancement, and, in general, all its meanest features remain.

Though often leading armies, the Mahratta Brahmins have not, with some remarkable † exceptions, gained a high reputation for courage; and if not arrogant or cruel, they have often merited the charge of being unfeeling and oppressive

The plain uninstructed Mahratta Sudra, or Khetri, enters upon his career as a soldier in the same dress, and with the same habits, with which he tills his field or attends his flocks; and he has, generally speaking, preserved, throughout revolutions that have at one time raised him to the highest consideration and power, and again cast him back to his former occupations, the same

* The compound Persian term by which a person of this class is called, is Karkoon, which signifies "a man of business"

† Purseram Bhow, who co-operated with Lord Cornwallis in the war against Tippoo Sultan, A D 1792, was a Brahmin, and a man of extraordinary personal courage

simplicity of character. This may be referred to the nature of Hindu institutions, to the example of Sevajee and his leaders, and to the advantage derived from habits that gave facility to conquest, by placing him in strong contrast with the proud and formal Mahomedan; by associating him with the Hindu population of the countries he invaded, and by preventing his progress ever being impeded by that pomp, luxury, and pride, which form so often an incumbrance, if not an obstacle, to the most successful conquerors. That the Mahratta soldier was more distinguished by art, than by valour, that he gloried as much in rapid flight as in daring attack, is not denied by the warmest panegyrist of his own tribe, but though these facts are admitted, and farther, that he was often mean and sordid, it is contended, and with truth, that he had many excellent qualities. Few could claim superiority to him in patience under fatigue, hunger, and thirst, and in that plain manliness of character which remained unchanged by success or adversity. nor can we deny to the Mahrattas, in the early part of their history, and before their extensive conquests had made their vast and mixed armies cease to be national, the merit of conducting their Cossack* inroads into

* The term Cossack is used because it is the one by which the Mahrattas describe their own species of warfare. In their language, the word Cossâkee (borrowed, like many of their terms, from the Moghuls) means "predatory."

other countries with a consideration to the inhabitants, which had been deemed incompatible with that terrible and destructive species of war. But this leads us to a view of the principles on which they acted.

Unlike in their origin and habits to the Goths and Vandals that devastated Europe, or those Tartar tribes who have so often conquered and destroyed the kingdoms of Asia, the first Mah-rattas were driven to arms by oppression, and tempted to continue in the exercise of their new profession, by the proved weakness of their oppressors. The character and constitution of their early power made it impossible for them to maintain themselves in many of the countries they were able to plunder, but the ability to destroy generated a right to share in the produce. Hence all those Mahratta sources* of revenue, which they introduced into India. Whenever these were admitted, the country had a respite from their ravages; but we cannot believe that the able chiefs, who first inflicted these heavy taxes upon the revenues of the Moghul empire, ever viewed it as more than a temporary expedient, which, by enabling them to maintain great armies, and to spread their agents and influence, afforded them the means of progressive encroachment. As

* Chout, Sirdaismookhee &c

such, it was admirably suited to the times, and to their peculiar condition and character. By obtaining peace in one quarter, they were at liberty to carry their arms into another. They had also, through this means, an opportunity, which they thoroughly understood how to use, of fomenting divisions in families and states. From the house of Timur, to the lowest of the Rajpoot chiefs within their sphere, we find every party had a secret or open supporter in a Mahratta leader or agent. The character and actions of this people were in all respects singular, they had indeed few, if any, similar features in common with other nations. Those means which the pride of conquerors have often rejected, seem always to have been used in preference by this extraordinary race: not merely the desperate and discontented were invited to their standard, but robbers and plunderers were courted as auxiliaries, and allowed to act for a period in their own mode, and for their own advantage. To insinuate themselves by wiles into a share of the management of a district or a country, and to make a party amongst its inhabitants, were deemed better than using force, even when the latter was in their power, and in effecting these objects their patience and humility were great aids. They were content at first to divide the government, as well as revenues, with the Hindu chiefs of the military class they found established, trusting to

MAHRATTA INVASION OF MALWA.

time and intrigue for their gradual reduction. This policy was never more remarkably exemplified than in the progress of their establishment in Central India. They assumed at first, in their manners and sentiments, the exact shape that was best calculated to win the Hindu population of that country. The Rajpoot princes and lords were conciliated by every concession to their pride, and to those forms of dignity which they had learnt from association with the Moghul government; while the lower classes, particularly the landholders and cultivators, saw in the Mahrattas (amidst all their excesses) beings of their own order, who, though they had risen to power and dominion, continued to preserve the strongest attachment to the manners and usages of those village communities in which they were born. It could not but be gratifying to this class of inhabitants, to find that the principal leaders of the conquerors appeared to place more value in their names of Potail (or head man) and Putwaree (or register), which they derived from being hereditary officers of some petty village in their native country, than in all the high-sounding titles they could attain. The constitution of the government and army of the Mahrattas was, however, more calculated to destroy, than to create an empire. Their first chief, Sevajee, had no pretensions but those of a successful leader, and his latter years were marked by severe re-

verses Similar feelings and circumstances had attached many of his tribe to his person, and, before his death, enough was done to embody the Mahiattas as a nation, and to give them an union, which was cemented by the cruel and implacable character of their enemies The tortures and disgrace inflicted on Sambha, the son of their first prince, with many acts of a similar nature, gave a common sentiment of indignation and revenge, that supplied for the moment the place of better ties The fabric, however, had no foundation The chiefs were, from the first, almost equal, and as the armies they led depended principally on success for pay, the leaders were necessarily invested with their powers for the collection of tribute, or revenues, from the provinces into which they were sent But though a share* was claimed by Government, the application of the greater part in the payment of his troops and other expenses, raised the successful general into a ruler of the countries he had conquered This every where produced the same

* I have obtained the perusal of all the old papers of the Puars of Dhar, and find by the Sunnuds, or orders, granted to Oudajee Puar, in A D 1724, by Bajerow, empowering him to collect Chout in Malwa and Guzerat, that he was allowed for the expense of his army one half of his collections, the other went to the State The following is a literal translation of this general, or rather sweeping Sunnud

“ To the high Raja Sree Oudajee Puar, may Lutclmce
 “ the Beautiful increase your fortune and dignity! from

MAHRATTA INVASION OF MALWA

effects, and the public interest was lost sight of in the desire of individuals to promote their own ambition. The early example of the Paishwah's usurpation was followed almost by all to whom opportunity offered; and this was aided by the form of their village governments (which is probably the oldest of Hindu institutions) having been carried into the state: every office, from that of Paishwah, or prime minister, to the lowest employ became hereditary. This practice, by

" Bajerow Bullal, Minister (Purdhan), be blessed! in the
" year of Fuslee 1123 †

" The half of the Mokassa (75 per cent of the Chout) of the
" countries of Guzerat and Malwa belongs to the (Huzooroun)
" court, half is granted to you as Serinjam, (or for the support
" of the troops) You are our commander, and our trust is in
" you be happy with what has been bestowed upon you
" Given the 5th of Rubbee ul Awul There is no occasion
" to write more."

This was obviously given at the commencement of an expedition, as a guide and authority how to act on success for I find among the same manuscripts no less than one hundred and fifty Orders, dated A. D. 1729, from Bajerow to the Managers of the towns and districts, from Bundelcund East to near Ahmedabad West, and as far North as Marwar, directing the payment of Chout and Sirdaismookhee to Oudajee Puar. These were evidently given after the country had been over-run. I conclude that this authentic record may be taken as an example of the usual process.

† Hindu account, which differs seven years from the Mahomedan

giving rights, limited patronage, and weakened the heads of the empire, among whom divisions early arose; but, instead of declining, the state appeared for a long period to prosper the more from that spirit of action which was excited by the clashing interests of the chiefs who shared in its anomalous administration. The Brahmins who presided over it had, to use the strong expression of a Mahomedan writer, “converted the peaceful cord of their order into a bow-string” But, notwithstanding the military reputation which some of the Paishwahs added to their other pretensions to supreme authority, all that superior intelligence which their habits and education gave them, was unequal to keep in check the ambition of enterprising chiefs, who, intoxicated with success, soon forgot their obligations to the Brahmin princes by whom they were elevated to command. One part of the policy of the Paishwahs, tended greatly to accelerate the independence of these leaders:—the fear of their disturbing the peace of their native country, or consuming its resources, led to their constant employment in foreign expeditions, where they were subject to little or no control; and to attain the object of keeping a successful general and his adherents at a distance, the superior was satisfied with nominal allegiance.

This is a short statement of the principal of those causes which led, at a very early date, to a spread of Mahratta authority over all India, and

MAHRATTA INVASION OF MALWA

to the rise of many chiefs of that nation into the exercise of the functions, if they did not assume the name, of princes. Broken and disjointed as they appeared, they still, however, retained some general motives which led to their occasional union *. Nor were these quite forgotten till success had destroyed their enemies, and they were impelled, by the continued action of that system which had raised them to power, to prey upon and destroy each other; and even then they never changed their nominal relations as members of one confederacy, but, on the contrary, seemed to cherish them, in every extreme, with a prejudice that almost approximated to religious feeling. One cause of this was a strong attachment to the country of their birth. Whether in Hindustan or Malwa, they continually kept up an intimate intercourse with their families and kindred tribe in their native districts; and the original links by which the community was bound, were constantly revived and strengthened by ties which operate with great force upon Hindus, as no people are

* A Mahomedan writer, remarking upon the tendency to union which distinguished the Mahratta confederacy, even amidst all their divisions, observes, " that the stubborn materials retained their nature, and, like unto the dissevered particles of the same substance, had always a propensity to reunite. Or, as we are told (he adds) of the serpent when cut asunder, that the dismembered parts have a separate existence, and seek again incorporation "

more strongly and virtuously attached to their connexions than this race, nor is the bond destroyed or even weakened by one party reaching high power, and the other remaining in comparative obscurity

The Paishwahs owed little of that real or nominal obedience, which they to the last preserved as heads of the Mahratta empire, to their being of the sacred race of Brahma. On the contrary, though (as has been noticed) this aided impression in the first instance, there can be no doubt that the Brahmins of the Mahratta state have lost, by their grasp at worldly power, much of that respect and awe which are usually granted to their tribe by Hindus, when they preserve their original character of spiritual instructors. But the attachment, if not allegiance, which all classes had for the Paishwah, as chief officer of the state, though greatly impaired, was not destroyed, it was always, when threatened with misfortune, their watchword of union. This cherished sentiment was never shewn more forcibly than within the last few years, and, with more of virtue and talent in its object, it might have saved a confederacy from destruction, of which it was the main link.

The incursions of the Mahrattas into Malwa, before the death of Aurungzeeb, have been noticed, as well as that of A D 1721, at which time the province was ruled by a manager, on the part

MAHRATTA INVASION OF MALWA

of the celebrated Nizam-ul-Moolk * This Omrah had been confirmed in the office of Soobahdar, or governor, by Mahomed Shah, but soon afterwards this high station was taken from him, and given to Raja Girdhur Bahadur†, who was some time afterwards attacked and defeated by an army of Mahrattas, under Chumnajee Pundit‡ and Oudajee Puar These chiefs proceeded to attack the town of Sarungpoor, the Mahomedan governor of which was glad to purchase their retreat by giving them fifteen thousand rupees, and this amount (which was probably the utmost the town could pay) became, from an usage very characteristic of Mahratta conquest, the sum§ fixed for their future annual demand

The Mahrattas at this period ravaged at large

* Asoph Jah Nizam-ul-Moolk was appointed to be Soobahdar of Malwa in A. D. 1717, in the short reign of Ruffee-ul-Dirjet

† Girdhur Bahadur was a Brahmin of the Naggur tribe, originally from Guzerat

‡ Chumnajee Pundit was brother to the Paishwah Bajewrow, and it appears from a Diary in the Poona records for the year 1729, that he was in Malwa, and he had probably been there some time

§ This sum is termed in the Persian manuscripts "Ghu-neem Sea," or "an Account of Plunder," and the letters of the two Persian words, in their numerical power, give the date of transaction Hejira 1141, or A. D. 1728

both the provinces of Guzerat* and Malwa, and their complete reduction of the latter was greatly aided by the policy of Nizam-ul-Moolk, who appears to have desired to plant this nation as a barrier between the Deckan and Hindustan. Though it is likely this chief had not the power of stemming the tide of desolation, he had that of turning it, for the moment, from the countries under his own immediate sway to those of his enemies, and such he considered the Emperor Mahomed Shah and his court. This situation of affairs tempted the ambition of the Paishwah Bajerow, who, having marched from Poona with A D 1731 a large army, made himself master of the provinces of Nemauro and Malwa. In the latter he was opposed by Dia Bahadur, but the defeat† A D 1732. and death of that officer, who had succeeded his relation Raja Girdhur,‡ gave this province to the

* The country of Guzerat was invaded and partly conquered in A D 1724, by some Mahratta chiefs. These were Kuddum Bandiah and Pillajee Guickwar, the founder of the present dynasty. Pillajee settled to the South of the Mhaee river, while Kuddum Bandiah took possession of Godra and the districts on the opposite bank of that stream.

† This action, in which Dia Bahadur and about 2000 of his troops were slain, was fought near the village of Terlah, half way between Dhar and Amjherra.

‡ Raja Girdhur, during the time he was Soobahdar of Malwa, surrounded Oojein with a wall, probably in anticipation of attack from the Mahrattas. It is a curious fact,

MAHRATTÁ INVASION OF MALWA.

Mahrattas Mahomed Khan Bungush, who was next appointed Soobahdar, in vain attempted to arrest their progress; and Sevaec Jey Singh, Raja of Jeypoor, who was nominated to supersede him, either from conceiving opposition hopeless, or from entertaining (as he is accused of doing by all Mahomedan authois) a secret friendship and understanding with the enemy, prevailed upon the Empeior to appoint Bajerow Soobahdar of Malwa. But this did not take place till the horse of the Paishwah had laid waste the countries of Agra and Allahabad, and the Imperial armies had been foiled in their efforts to expel them from that province.

These events bring us to a new era in Mahratta history. Their rights as powerful plunderers had been long before recognized, and a share of the revenues of the greater part of the empire had been allotted them in the vain hope of purchasing safety for the remainder. Their ruler was now nominated to the government of one of the chief provinces of Hindustan. This, it was true, he had first conquered; but he had professedly levied no more than the Mahratta tri-

that, though an inscription upon the wall ascribes its erection to Raja Girdhur, the inhabitants of the town continue to believe, on tradition, that it was the work of his successor Dia Bahadur.

butes*, and appears to have sought with solicitude a legitimate title to govern it in the name of the Emperor. The peculiarity of character which has been noticed in this race was never more displayed than on their becoming masters of Central India. Bajerow and his principal leaders, content with the profit and substance of what they had attained, so far from weakening impression, or alarming prejudice, by the assumption of rank and state, seem to have increased in their professions of humility, as they advanced in power. They affected a scrupulous sense of inferiority in all their intercourse and correspondence with the Emperors, and with their principal chiefs, particularly the Rajpoot princes. The Mahatta leaders, indeed, not only submitted to be treated, in all points of form and ceremony, as the inferiors of those whose countries they had despoiled and usurped, but in hardly any instance considered the right of conquest as a sufficient title to the smallest possession. Grants for every usurpation were sought, and obtained, from those who possessed the local sovereignty. By this mode of proceeding, which was singularly suited to the feelings of a people like the inhabitants of India, who may be generally described as inveterate in their habits and abhorrent of change, they evaded many of those obstacles which had impeded former

* Chout, Sindatsmool hee, &c

conquerors But then internal relations with each other appear still more remarkable than those they established with foreign states We shall have occasion to shew, that Mahomed Shah, before he granted Ballajee a commission as Soobahdar of Malwa, exacted from his military chiefs a deed, by which they became guarantees for the fidelity and allegiance of their nominal lord This measure and many others of similar character prove that the authority of the Paishwah was only recognized as that of first officer of the state, and he seems to have consulted with other chiefs of the confederacy, on points that related to their general interest, on a footing almost of equality, but, perhaps, this extraordinary* proceeding is in some degree to be referred to the master-principle of the Mahrattas, which rejected no means that could promote their object

All accounts regarding the establishment of the Mahrattas in Central India agree, that their first administration of that country was moderate and good, particularly as contrasted with those aggravated evils† which are ever the concomitants of

* The usage here described is, however, not limited to the Mahrattas, but common to Hindu governments, in few of which the princes appear to have obtained any very despotic power, the shape of all being that of a feudal confederacy

† The hereditary Zemindar of Indore gave me a very distinct account of the first settlement of the Mahrattas in

falling power, when the necessities of a sovereign lead him to oppress those whom he cannot protect. Then conduct to the inhabitants was for a period very conciliatory, and they soon established a strength that made the weak govern-

Malwa, and, considering the transaction as recent, the narrator a respectable man advanced in years, and that his grandfather, Row Nund Lal, was the person who met and conducted the Mahrattas into the province, we can hardly doubt his general accuracy. The following are the exact words of his answer to a question upon the subject.

“ In the reign of Mahomed Shah, when the Moghul Empire had fallen to pieces, and the power of the Delhi monarch was rapidly declining, Dia Bahadur (a Brahmin) was Soobahdar of Malwa. The corruptions and abuses of power which prevailed in the remnants of the Delhi territories were great, and the distress arising from a total neglect of the duties incumbent upon Government fell heavily upon the peaceful husbandman and labourer of the field, who groaned under the oppression of every petty tyrant that chose to act the despot. The subordinate chiefs, or Thakoors, of Malwa, impatient of the oppressions and rapacious exactions imposed upon them and their Ryots by Dia Bahadur or his agents, represented their grievances to the court of Delhi, and solicited redress. The reigning monarch, however, Mahomed Shah, held the reins of government with too weak a hand, and was too much immersed in indolent and effeminate pleasure, to afford redress, and the Rajpoot chiefs, finding their hopes disappointed, turned their eyes towards the Raja of Jey-poor, Sevaee Jey Singh, to whom they made their appeal. Jey Singh was one of the most powerful and able of those Rajas of Hindustan who still remained obedient to the Emperor. his allegiance, however, had begun to waver, in

MAHRATTA INVASION OF MALWA

ment of Mahomed Shah despatch of recovering a country which became the home of the invaders, from whence they carried their predatory excursions into Hindustan ; and a grant of a part of its revenues, not excepting the lands near Delhi, was one of the early fruits of their success -

“ consequence, it is supposed, of an affront he had received,
“ and a secret intercourse was established between him and
“ the Paishwah Bajerow, the object of which was believed to
“ be the subversion of the Mahomedan power The Rajpoot
“ chiefs of Malwa preferred their complaints to him he
“ recommended them to invite the Mahrattas to invade the
“ province, and subdue the Moghul authority. Row Nund
“ Lal, Choudry, or principal officer of the district of Indore,
“ was then a Zemindar of wealth and consequence, and had
“ troops amounting to 2000 horse and foot, who were paid
“ from the revenues he enjoyed He had also charge of the
“ different posts which guarded the fords of the Nerbudda,
“ and he was on this latter account selected to treat with the
“ Mahrattas and promote the invasion The army of Bajerow
“ was encamped on the plains of Berhampoor, and a force of
“ about 12,000 men under Mulhar Row Holkar formed the
“ advance Row Nund Lal deputed a Vakeel to Mulhar
“ Row with an invitation to enter Malwa, and an assurance of
“ the Ghauts, or passes, being left open for his troops, and of
“ all the Zemindars aiding the invaders The Mahrattas, in
“ consequence, marched, and crossed the Nerbudda at a
“ ford near Akberpoor, a village between Dhurimporee and
“ Mhysir Dia Bahadur, having in the mean time received
“ intelligence of their approach, had moved with a force
“ beyond Amjherra, and blocked up the Ghauts which lead
“ to Tandah, by which he supposed the enemy meant to
“ ascend to the Table Land The Mahrattas, however,

Bajerow, after overrunning Bundelcund, plundering Hindustan, and exacting a promise of the Chout, or fourth of the revenue, upon the whole of the Moghul empire, left Malwa, (six years subsequent to his entering that province,) to proceed to his Southern territories. He appears in this year to have solicited and obtained a letter and present from the Emperor, placing him in the highest rank of his nobles. This document states, that Bajerow has been exalted above his equals, by the grant of territories; that a splendid

“ being favoured by the Zemindars and inhabitants, were
 “ conducted up an unguarded pass, now called the Bhyroo
 “ Ghaut, a few miles to the East of Mandoo; and having
 “ brought up their whole force on the plain without opposition,
 “ they afterwards encountered Dia Bahadur at a village called
 “ Tirellah, between Amjherra and Dhar, where the latter was
 “ defeated and slain, and his troops dispersed. From that
 “ period the Mahrattas obtained paramount rule in Malwa.
 “ The ancient Thakoors, Zemindars, &c. were allowed to retain
 “ their possessions, on the same terms they held them
 “ under the Moghul government, and guaranteed from the
 “ recurrence of the oppressive exactions they had lately been
 “ suffering. The Moghul Amildars and the public officers,
 “ with their Thannahs or posts, were all turned out, and re-
 “ placed by those of the Mahrattas. Some of the Thakoors,
 “ who afterwards became refractory and neglected to pay
 “ their tributes and perform their engagements, were de-
 “ prived of their possessions and power, which were assumed
 “ by their new masters, whose proceedings, however on their
 “ first taking possession of the province were studiously
 “ adapted to conciliate the Hindu chiefs and inhabitants ”

dress * is transmitted to him :—and he is reminded of his duty, and directed “to tread firmly in the broad path of fidelity” The year before these honours were conferred, the Emperor had endeavoured to expel Bajerow from Malwa, by the reappointment of Nizam ul Moolk to the office of Soobahdar of that province. This was probably one of the causes that led the Paishwah to proceed to the Deckan, where he, no doubt, expected, from the absence of the Nizam (who was called to Delhi to oppose Nadir Shah), to make considerable conquests. But the close of his career was marked by a memorable reverse. He suffered a signal defeat in the vicinity of Poona from Nazir Jung, the son of Nizam ul Moolk, and his capital was taken and burnt. These events preceded only a few months the death of this celebrated Mahratta chief †. He was succeeded by his son Ballajee, who went through the mock ceremony of obtaining an investiture from the imprisoned Sahoo Raja, before he entered upon the exercise of his functions as Paishwah.

The invasion of Nadir Shah had thrown the whole of India into confusion and dismay, and Ballajee hastened to take advantage of the oppor-

* The articles of this dress (Khelaut) are enumerated in the letter

† Bajerow Bullal succeeded to the office of Paishwah in May 1720, and died in the same month, after a rule of twenty years, leaving it to his son Ballajee Bajerow

tunity, which this event afforded, of extending his power. The first authentic record we have of his reign, is a very remarkable compact with Nizam ul Moolk. It is in the form of requests and answers, a very usual shape of Indian diplomatic papers.

The first request is, that Ballajee shall be appointed Soobahdar of Malwa*, and have the whole of that province as a Jahgeer, or estate. The answer is, that the Nizam is himself Soobahdar, but, on the Paishwah promising obedience, the Sunnuds, or deeds, to be Naib, or deputy, shall be sent him.

In the next article a request is made for the fifty lacks of rupees which the Emperor had promised as an aid †. Every effort (it is stated in reply) will be made to obtain this amount.

From the tenor of the superscription ‡ on this

* It has been before explained, that the greatest part of that country which we term Central India, was included in the Moghul Soobah or government of Malwa. Vide Chap. I.

† Mudud Kurch, literally, aid of expenditure.

‡ This Persian deed is styled "Memorandum of Demands and Answers." There is upon the envelope of this document a short note in the Mahratta language—"That the enclosed Memorandum regarded the Soobahdary of Malwa, and the fifty lacks of rupees, was sent by Ballajee Row to the Nabob Asoph Jah, who was then (the 26th of Ramzan, year not mentioned) at Surree in Malwa, and the answers to the Memorandum were originally in Asoph Jah's own handwriting"—Asoph Jah left Delhi in 1740. He fought his

MAHRATTA INVASION OF MALWA

document, it must have been written when Nizam ul Moolk was passing through Malwa (after Nadir Shah had left India) to punish his rebellious son in the Deckan.

During the three years that intervened from the accession of Ballajee to the office of Paishwah, to the death of Jey Singh, there appears to have been a constant friendly intercourse between the latter and the Mahattas ; and several letters and engagements, which have been preserved, shew distinctly the character of this connexion, which, though perhaps originally grounded on Hindu feeling, took a different shape after the Mahattas had entered the scene. Jey Singh's object was, to continue the medium of intercourse between them and the Emperor ; but he desired, as appears from certain articles in their agreements, to combine his duty to his sovereign with his friendship to the Mahattas. He also wished to use the latter as auxiliaries : and an engagement* of four articles is chiefly directed against Abber Singh, Raja of Joudpooi, with whom he was then in a state of hostility. But death came seasonably to release this great and accomplished

son Nizam u Dowlah in 1741, and he continued in the Deckan till his death, 1748. Mahomed Shah died the same year.

* This offensive and defensive engagement is dated in the year of the Sumbut 1798, and below 1141 of the Sorsun, the Arabic æra used by the Mahrattas, which dates correspond with Hegira 1155 and A. D. 1741.

'prince* from a scene of intrigue, distraction, and guilt, in which, from his want of means to guide the storm that was around him, his character might have been soiled, but could not have been elevated. The last engagement he concluded with the Mahattas, from its date, could only have been settled a short period before his death. Its first article is completely an offensive and defensive engagement. The second is remarkable : it supposes (probably on very good experience) the likelihood of Bajerow breaking his faith with the Emperor. Jey Singh states that he will prevent such an occurrence, but, if it happens, he will follow the Paishwah†. The third and fourth articles are general, but by the fifth he promises to pay attention to the interests of some Rajpoot chiefs to the North of the Chumbul river, whom Ballajee had recommended, and to endeavour to establish them in their possessions, on their paying the tribute, provided they were firm in their allegiance to the Emperor. This latter qualification proves, that he was still sensible to his duty in that quarter ; and indeed it is probable he acted only a ministerial

* He died A. D. 1742

† The literal translation from the original in the Rangree dialect is, " I will be after you," which may be interpreted either as implying continued friendship in all extremes, or hostility on a change of conduct. The latter is, fortunately for the fame of Jey Singh, the most obvious reading

part, in all that related to the intercourse between Mahomed Shah and the Paishwah. In the concluding and most important article of the engagement alluded to, Jey Singh promises “to procure, in the course of six months, the Emperor’s command for the issue of a Firman, or order, in the name of the Sahoo Raja, and the transmission of the usual presents, also the Sums, or deeds, for the Vicegerency of the Subah of Malwa, and the sanction to take tribute, as established by the Emperor, from the Rajas on this side (i.e. the North) of the Chumbul.” This treaty was concluded on the fourteenth night of the Moon of Jeth, in the year of the Sumbut 1798, corresponding with A D 1741. Jey Singh died the next year. Few chiefs have attained higher or more merited reputation. The city of Jeypoor, which he built to perpetuate his name, exhibits in its splendid appearance the mind of its founder. The erection of an observatory, and its endowment at his new capital, shewed that the love of science was mixed with the other virtues and qualities of this prince, who completely fulfilled, during a long reign, the extraordinary promise he gave even in childhood. But he belongs to the subject of this narration, only as a Chief who at some periods had power, and throughout his life great influence, over the whole of Central India, where his name is still fondly cherished by all, and particularly by the Rappoots. These

deem him, and Jeswunt Singh of Joudpoor, who is dear to them from his opposition to Aurungzeeb, the greatest of their race

It is impossible not to suppose, that the influence of such a character as Jey Singh operated as some restraint on Ballajee, but the contempt of all morality, in their political arrangements, was with the Mahrattas avowed, and shameless. We have a remarkable instance of this in a note affixed to an engagement made by Ballajee and his uncle Chimnajee with the weak sovereign of Delhi: in which, after stating various conditions of service that they bind themselves to perform, it is added, "that Ballajee Row* intended in future to do every thing candour and "sincerity dictated, to obey the Emperor's wishes "as appeared best to his judgment, and to refrain "from the litigiousness he had formerly practised "in causing unnecessary delays, &c. by pretended "scruples, arising from the omission of a Fir-

* This remarkable confession is attached to an engagement of nine articles given to the Emperor by Ballajee and his uncle Chimnajee, after the former had been nominated Soobahdar of Malwa. It is believed to be written in the Paishwah's own hand, and commences with stating that the agreement of nine articles had been made after much discussion, in the time of Khan Dowran, to please the Vizier, by advice of Row Kirpah Ram. The latter person was of some celebrity, he was long Vakeel on the part of Jey Singh at Delhi, and was a personal favourite of Mahomed Shah.

MAHRATTA INVASION OF MALWA.

“ maun, or other alleged informalities; neither
“ would he in future endeavour to evade the per-
“ formance of any duty or service by pretended
“ want of cash, or any such groundless excuse ’

The Emperor Mahomed Shah had appointed* Ballajee to be Soobahdar of Malwa; but there was at this period a remarkable indirectness in all proceedings betwixt the Emperor and the Paishwah,—and the high office of Soobahdar of Malwa is, by a singular form, given in trust† to the Vizier, to be bestowed upon the Paishwah. It is probable that the weak successor of Timour was ashamed of the concessions into which he was forced, and that this expedient originated in a desire to prevent his dignity being compromised by the form of the engagement. On these points the Mahratta chief was careless, and, so long as he advanced in the substance of power‡, he willingly left the name of it to others. Ballajee appears

* This appointment is made by two Sunnuds, or deeds, the one dated the twenty-second of Jumad-ul-Awul, and the other the eighteenth of Rujub, in the twenty-fourth year of the Emperor's reign.

† This is the form in the second Sunnud, or deed, dated the eighteenth of Rujub.

‡ The great solicitude with which the Paishwah sought the title and power of Soobahdar of Malwa is proved by a variety of papers, propositions, and minor agreements, in which he is profuse of his professions of obedience and allegiance, in the event of his wishes being complied with. There is among

from other documents, to have extorted from the court of Delhi sums of money upon the most groundless and even insulting pretexts, amongst others, a large sum which had been promised to his father, on the condition of his joining the Emperor on the invasion of Nadu, was claimed and extorted, though Bajerow had on that occasion not only kept aloof, but taken every advantage of the crisis to enlarge his possessions

The gratitude of Ballajee, when he obtained the office of Soobahdar of Malwa, was expressed

these records a curious instance of Ballajee's readiness to subscribe any thing, and to endeavour by every means to promote his objects. In an engagement which he gave the Emperor, dated the twenty-third year of his reign, (one year before he obtained the grant of Malwa,) it is written in the preamble "I, Ballajee Row Mookh Purdhan, through the "mediation of Asoph Jah," and in another paper of the same purport and date, and which exactly corresponds on all other points, he not only omits the mention of this mediation, but states that he, the Paishwah, will not contract any friendship with Asoph Jah, or others, without the royal permission. It has been conjectured that the first of these records was the original draft, but, not being approved by the Emperor, the other was substituted, but it is much more probable, from both having been carefully preserved among the state papers at Poona, that one engagement was forwarded to the court of Delhi, and another to Nizam ul Moolk. Such a proceeding is quite conformable with the usage of Mahratta politicians, who, if they attain the object of the moment, are insensible to the disgrace of future detection and exposure

MAHRATTA INVASION OF MALWA

in an engagement* from him and his uncle, which though written in a tone of submission to the Emperor, contained in its stipulations am-

* The following is the translation of the articles of agreement of Pundit Purdhan Ballajee Row, and Chimnajee Row

“ As from beneficence and bounty the Soobahdary of Malwa has been bestowed upon the servants Ballajee Row and Chimnajee Row, we are willing to perform our service as follows

“ 1st. We wish to have the honour of enjoying the dignity of being admitted to the august presence

“ 2d We promise that we shall not invade, plunder, or lay waste any country except Malwa

“ 3d No other Mahratta chief shall pass beyond the Ghauts of the Nerbudda, into any part of the Soobah of Hindustan We take upon ourselves this responsibility

“ 4th A respectable Mahratta officer, with a body of 500 horse, shall always be present in the service of his Majesty

“ 5th We accept the sum which has this year been given us as Enam or gift, but in future we will not ask for a fraction from the court, which is the centre of the world, and shall always remain steady and firm in our duty and allegiance

“ 6th Whenever the victorious army shall move abroad, a body of 4000 horse shall be furnished by us to accompany the camp, but should more be required, their expenses must in that case be defrayed by the enlightened presence

“ 7th. We will not exact from the Zemindars beyond the river Chumbul, a fraction more than the established Paish-kush, or tribute

“ 8th Should the enlightened presence issue an order for us to punish any petty Zemindars in that quarter, we shall

ple proof of the real condition of those, who sought the promotion of then temporary interests by unmeaning professions of allegiance and obedience

In the anxiety of Ballajee to obtain possession of Malwa, he had recourse to the measure, which has been before noticed, of making his chief generals become the guarantees of his good faith, and the following document was given to Mahomed Shah to guard against his future encroachments “ We, Ranojee Sindia, Mulharjee Holkar, “ Jeswunt Row Puar, and Pillajee Jadhoo, hereby “ give it under our hands, that, Ballajee Row “ Mookh Purdhan having agreed to serve his “ Majesty, should he hereafter desire to recede “ from his duty, we shall by our representations “ prevent his doing so, but if, notwithstanding “ our endeavours, he still persists in withdrawing “ from his duty, we shall in that case quit the

“ furnish a quota of 4000 horse, who will exert their endeavours to effect the object required

“ 9th With respect to the Jahgeers of Killedars and the “ perquisites of Canoongoes, Mooftees, &c as also lands, “ pensions, and other charitable institutions emanating from “ the bounty of the enlightened presence, we declare that we “ will not infringe upon them, but allow the full benefit of “ them to those on whom they have been bestowed, that they “ may employ themselves in uttering benedictions for his “ Majesty’s eternal prosperity ”

N B The note found on the envelope of this agreement has been before noticed Vide page 91

“ service of the Puidhan Pundit In token of
 “ the same we have written the above as a deed ”
 This document is dated the seventh of Rubee ul
 Awul, in the twenty-third year of the reign, A. D.
 1743.

The retrospect of a few years gives a still more singular character to this extraordinary record Ranojee had carried the slippers of the father of the chief for whose conduct he now pledged himself, and Mulhar Row Holkar had only a few years before been attending a flock of goats, at his native village in the Deckan; but it was a period of revolution, and these persons were now great military commanders, who had not only armies of their own, but interests, particularly North of the Nerbudda, quite distinct from those of the Paishwah, whose history indeed, subsequent to the events here stated, has little connexion with that of Central India; to illustrate which it will be necessary to give a concise account of the Mahratta families of Puar, Sindia, and Holkar, whose ancestors were employed in the first reduction of this country, and to whom it afterwards became subject.

CHAPTER IV

The families of the Puars of Dhar and Dewass

IN the early periods of Mahratta history, the family of Puar appears to have been one of the most distinguished*. They were of a Rajpoot tribe, numbers of which had been settled in Malwa at a remote æra, from whence this branch had migrated to the Deckan. Sevajee Puar, the first of the family that can be traced in the latter country, was a landholder†, and his grandsons Sambajee and Kalojee were military commanders, in the service of the celebrated Sevajee. Three sons of the former, Oudajee, Anund Row, and Jugdeo, served the successor of that prince (Sahoo Raja), during whose reign Oudajee attained considerable rank. He was not only intrusted with a high command, but treated with great consideration, as appears by the style and purport

* This tribe has been before noticed. Vide page 23

† He was Zemindar of Sopaut Kingee and Kurungaum in the Deckan

of letters and deeds from Sahoo Raja and his minister Bajerow, still in the possession of the family

Oudajee, eight years before Bajerow conquered Central India, was employed to establish the predatory claims* of the Mahrattas over that country and Guzerat † He however offended the Paishwah, who first deprived him of all power, and, having afterwards imprisoned‡ him, raised his younger brother, Anund Row, to the head of the family. From this event occurring before the division of the territories of Malwa, the latter is considered the founder of the Principality of Dhar

It is a curious coincidence that the success of

* Chout, Sirdaismookhee, &c &c

† Oudajee entered Guzerat, but made no permanent impression in that province, in which, as has been before stated, Bandiab and Pillajee Guickwar had established themselves. The latter, after some warfare, obliged Oudajee, in A. D. 1726, to retire into Malwa, and to abandon the forts of Dubbooy and Baroda, which he had occupied. Baroda became the capital of Pillajee, and has continued that of his descendants

‡ One account states that Oudajee escaped from prison and fled to the Deckan, where he died in obscurity at the village of Mooltan near Poona. Thus far is certain, that his name never again occurs in Mahratta history, and this circumstance, connected with his former fame, had given rise to suspicions that his death was hastened by the policy of Bajerow, and the fears of his successor Anund Row, whose defection to the Paishwah is considered to have been the chief cause of his brother's fall

the Mahrattas should, by making Dhar the capital of Anund Row and his descendants, restore the sovereignty of a race who had seven centuries before been expelled from the government of that city and territory But the present family, though of the same tribe (Puar), claim no descent * from the ancient Hindu Princes of Malwa They have, like all the Khetri tribes who became incorporated with the Mahrattas, adopted, even in their modes of thinking, the habits of that people The heads of the family, with feelings more suited to chiefs of that nation than Rajpoot princes, have purchased the office of Potail †, or head-man, in some villages in the Deckan, and their descendants continue to attach value to their ancient, though humble, rights of village officers in that quarter Notwithstanding that these usages, and

* The Rajas of the petty principality of Soont assert their title to this proud lineage

† I have seen this Sunnud for the office of Potail to the village of Komtar, in the Pergunnah of Junneer, which was purchased for 1112 rupees and a horse by Anund Row Puar, in A D 1710 The son of Anund Row, Jeswunt Row Puar, bought the half of the office of Potail of the village of Kungaum, in the Pergunnah of Kundah, in the province of Janneer, in A D 1734, when Prince of Dhar, he paid 751 rupees for the purchase These offices, which with their small immunities were occasionally disturbed in the time of the Paishwahs, have been eagerly reclaimed since the British authority was extended over the Poona territories

the connexions they formed, have amalgamated this family with the Mahrattas, they still claim, both on account of their high birth, and being officers of the Rajas of Sattara (not of the Paishwahs), rank and precedence over the house of Sindia and Holkar, and these claims, even when their fortunes were at the lowest ebb, were always admitted as far as related to points of form and ceremony. The late Jeswunt Row Holkar and Dowlet Row Sindia were, indeed, forward to acknowledge their superior rank, at the very moment they were usurping their power and despoiling their territories.

Anund Row Puai was vested with authority to collect the Mahratta share of the revenue of Malwa and Guzerat in A D 1734. This commission, however, could hardly have been acted upon, as the Paishwah, Bajerow, became Soobahdar of the former province in the ensuing year, and whatever forms the policy of the Mahrattas might have led them to observe, they were substantially the sovereigns of Malwa from this date. Anund Row soon afterwards settled at Dhar, which province, with the adjoining districts, and the tributes of some neighbouring Rajpoot chiefs, were assigned for the support of himself and his adherents.

Anund Row died A D 1749, and was succeeded by his son Jeswunt Row Puai, who accompanied the Paishwah to Hindustan, and was

one of the many distinguished leaders* who fell in the celebrated action which the Mahrattas, commanded by Sadasheo Bhow, the Paishwah's brother, fought at Paniput, against the combined Mahomedan armies, under the Afghan sovereign

* Jeswunt Row Puar had attained high consideration amongst the Mahrattas, and is spoken of as alike remarkable for his kindness and valour by the inhabitants of Malwa, who cherish many traditions of his fame. The following anecdote of this chief was related to me by one of my most respectable Native writers, Khealee Ram, who had at one period the management of Bersiah. He said, that about thirty years ago he had a long conversation with Himmutsingh, the hereditary Choudry, or chief officer of the district, (then eighty years of age,) who praised the goodness and high spirit of Jeswunt Row Puar extremely. When the Bhow was encamped on the river near Bersiah, Himmutsingh told him that Jeswunt Row took him and some others to the tent of the commander to see what was going on. "Jeswunt Row had gone to the inner tent to pay his respects, while I with other Zemindars (Himmutsingh observed) sat myself down at the entrance of the outer. Three Mahratta chiefs dismounting from their horses, and having no horsekeepers, bade me and two others hold them while they went into the tent of the Bhow. We did so. Jeswunt Row, on coming out, enquired how we came to have such occupations, when informed of what had occurred, he exclaimed in anger, 'Who dares degrade my Zemindars into horsekeepers?' and then turning to us, said, 'Mount these animals and ride them home, they are your property.' We readily obeyed, (said Himmutsingh,) and never heard more upon the subject, but kept our excellent horses and their fine housings."

PUARS OF DHAR

Ahmed Shah Abdallee Kundee Row, the son of Jeswunt Row, was a minor* when his father was slain, and the management of the family possessions fell to a Brahmin of the name of Madhoo Row Ourekur. From this period the petty state of Dhar appears to have declined. The Mahatta chiefs in Malwa, in their turn, took advantage of the weak and distracted state of this principality, and its ruin seemed at one period inevitable, when the well-known Ragobah, who brought misfortune on all who supported him, sent his family for refuge to Dhar, which was immediately surrounded by a detachment of the combined forces of his enemies. Anundee Baec, his principal wife, who had just been delivered of Bajelow (the last of the Paishwahs), was within the fort; and the object of the assailants was to obtain possession of her and the young prince. As Kundee Row had openly joined the standard of Ragobah, his countries in Malwa were resumed, and their restoration was the price given for the surrender of Anundee Baec and her child†, who were carried prisoners to the Deckan. The orders in the name of Paishwah Madhoo Row, directing the restoration of the different districts

* He was only two years and a half old

† The infant who was so early doomed to a prison might have been pitied, but none commiserated his depraved ambitious mother, who, when the young unfortunate Paishwah Narramjee Row, flying from his murderers, was clasping his

in Malwa to Kunder Row, explain specifically their tenure to be for the support* of troops; indeed, that was the only grant ever made to military chiefs, and no other appears to have been sought. It was, according to the practice of this loose state, no check to usurpation; and it gave them, when the paramount power was strong, an excuse with themselves and others for submission, which was congenial to their habits. The usage that rendered military command, as well as civil charge, hereditary, made them confident that their descendants would keep possession under this tenure, as long as they

arms round his uncle and imploring life, rushed from her apartment and unknit the boy's hands, and threw him with violence from Ragobah. He met the fate to which, it is believed by almost all Mahrattas, she, from a desire to raise herself and children, was the chief cause of his being doomed. Ragobah (that name of ill omen to all, and to none more than the English), who is considered by his countrymen as being weaker than he was wicked, continued through life under the influence of this bold bad woman, of whom I never heard a Mahratta speak but with disgust and indignation.

* It was by accident I discovered the deed for this tenure, which is termed *Serinjam*. The Pundit of Dhar shewed some alarm, at which I smiled, and told him his master had now the best tenure in India, a treaty with the British government, and no retrospect could or would be taken to his former rights. He said he believed so, but that many stories were told of our giving a construction to the terms of grants, which, though liberal and perhaps just, was not consistent with the manner in which they were understood by Mahrattas.

could under any other ; for they well knew, from the principles of their empire, that, when they ceased to be able to defend themselves, no titles, however valid, would save them from ruin.

Kundee Row Puar had married the daughter of Govind Row Guuckwar, by whom he had one son, born six months after his death. This prince, who was called Anund Row, remained at Baroda, the capital of his grandfather, till he was seventeen years of age, when he proceeded to Dhar ; and, though at first opposed by the Dewan Rung Row Ourekur, he succeeded in establishing himself in his principality

7. From the date of Anund Row's return, the history of the Puars of Dhar presents one series of misfortunes ; and during the last twenty years the efforts made by its princes have had less the character of a contest for power, than a struggle for existence The Mahratta chieftains Holkar*

* Jeswunt Row Holkar received the rebellious minister, Rung Row Ourekur, who claimed his protection, in the most friendly manner, and, while he carried on an ineffectual negotiation to reconcile him to his master, plundered and laid waste the country The minister, however, finding that Jeswunt Row could not accomplish his views, went to the Deckan, where he succeeded in instigating Dowlet Row Sindia to attack Dhar, A D 1807 That prince at first demanded thirty lacks of rupees from this petty state, asserting that he had orders from the Paishwah to resume its lands, which he threatened to enforce if this requisition was not complied with After a great effort, two lacks of rupees

and Sindia were amongst its principal despoilers Anund Row, after some vain efforts to preserve his territories, died His power devolved on

were raised, which were given, with an order for four more upon the Kotah tribute, but this was only a part of the loss which the conduct of Ourekur brought upon this principality The districts of Aggur and Soneil, which had been granted to that minister for his support, were by him made over to Sindia, and the hostilities of the latter did not stop, till he had despoiled Anund Row of the principal part of his possessions,

A D 1805 Those in Harrowtee were all seized, and Dhar was a second time attacked by one of his leaders, Juggah Bappoo, who extorted a considerable sum from its ruler —In two years afterwards (A D 1807) another of these, Sambajee Jugha, made war upon this declining principality, and took, after an action fought at Budnawur, the whole of that district, to satisfy the demand made by order of Sindia for seventy-five thousand rupees. A desire to regain his country led to this amount being raised and paid by Anund Row, but, during this transaction, that unfortunate prince died This event, with the confusion that ensued, was made the pretext of keeping both the money and the territory Anund Row is believed to have been poisoned by his sister, who was of a very bad and dissolute character Her supposed object was the government, which she would have exercised in the name of some child she meant to adopt. These hopes, if ever entertained, were completely frustrated, she was seized and put to death, with several real or presumed accomplices, a few days after her brother's death

About the period of these transactions, Mheer-Khan seized on Bersiah, a district of the Puars, and made it over to Kur-reem Khan Pindarry Some years afterwards the Pergunnahs of Tal and Mundawul were seized by Jeswunt Row Holkar,

his widow, Meenah Bae^{*} This princess was pregnant when her husband died, and, fearing the designs of Moraree Row, an illegitimate son of Jeswunt Row Puar, who had formed a party at Dhar, she went to Mandoo, where she was delivered of a son called Ramchunder Row Puar. This event gave strength to her cause ; and the

and granted to Ghuffoor Khan for the support of troops While the territories of this state in Malwa were taken and partitioned by every description of plunderers, the Dewan, who had been the chief cause of these misfortunes, after a reconciliation with Anund Row, which led him to stay at Dhar a few months, fled to Poona, where he completed the ruin of his prince, by persuading Bajerow to seize upon his possessions in the Deekan

Rung Row Ourekur is still alive, and resident at Poona He is represented as being an able man , and while he had the sole management of the affairs of Dhar, it was well governed His desire was, that Anund Row should remain at Baroda with his mother , but, when the impetuosity of that prince (for, though only seventeen years of age, he is said to have acted upon the impulse of his feelings) led to his sudden appearance in his own territories, and to a rupture with the Dewan, the latter, governed by ambition, seems to have found a malignant pleasure in giving his aid to destroy the state which he could not continue to rule and he lately made an unsuccessful attempt to defraud his prince of some small rights of inheritance in the Poona territories, which he pretended had been assigned for his support

* Meenah Bae was niece of Gahena Bae, the widow of Govind Row Guickwar, a woman of considerable ability, whose influence had for many years been paramount at the court of Baroda

commandant* of the fort of Dhar remaining faithful, obliged Moraree Row to have recourse to deceit. Meenah Bae was persuaded, by his professions of obedience and attachment, to come to the capital, but, instead of being permitted to proceed to the fort, was compelled to occupy a place in the town, where she was immediately besieged by the troops of her enemy, who even attempted to burn the house† in which she and her adherents lived. But her spirit was not to be subdued. While this contest was carrying on, she exchanged her child with that of a peasant's wife, and, keeping the latter, she instructed the woman to carry the young Raja to the fort, which was effected during the night. Moraree Row, the moment he discovered what had occurred, threatened vengeance, but the exulting mother told him he might wreak his rage on her as he pleased,—she was indifferent, now the prince who represented the family was beyond his power. She

* Killahdar

† I listened with pleasure when at Dhar, in December 1818, to the animated detail which Meenah Bae gave me of those events. "Ask Bappoo Raghunauth," she said, "and others who are near you, what advice they gave me, when the house in which I lived was ready to be enveloped in flames. They intreated me to fly, but I told them I would remain where my honour required I should, and if the purpose of my enemy was accomplished, it would be a Suttee (self-sacrifice by a female) worthy of my late husband."

had sent the commandant a message, imploring him to defend her son to the last, and to be heedless of her fate. Morae Row, after an unsuccessful attempt to take the fort, fled upon hearing that a body of troops from Guzerat were hastening to the relief of Meenah Bae. The desperate condition of the principality had led the Regent Princess to apply every where for aid. Sindia (in spite of his having been the principal despoiler) was solicited to save the legitimate heir from ruin. The British government was courted, through the Resident at Baroda, to interpose its protection. But it did not suit the convenience or policy of these states to interfere. The intreaties, danger, and spirited exertions of Meenah Bae, at last interested her relations and friends in Guzerat so far, that a force under Succaram Chinnajee* was sent to her support.

The avowed object of this aid was to save the principality of Dhar from destruction; but it was, no doubt, in contemplation that it might eventually become a dependance of the Guickwai government, and the immediate expedition was looked to as a source of profit and strength to the individuals who had projected, and were employed upon it. The latter speculation was completely

* Succaram Chinnajee was the brother of Sectaram, the minister at Baroda, who was supported in this measure by the influence of Gajena Bae, the aunt of Meenah Bae.

frustrated, a load of debt was incurred without any adequate advantage Succaram died, and his place was supplied by one of his officers, Bappoo Raghunauth, who, though he failed in realizing the hopes of the court of Baroda, succeeded by his activity and energy, which were supported by the confidence and courage of Meenah Bae, in keeping this petty state alive, till those revolutions occurred which have restored it (though with reduced territories) to a condition of peace and permanent security far beyond what it had ever known

The history of this change is short During the last few years Meenah Bae, aided by her Guzerat friends, carried on a petty warfare with Moraree Row for the possession of the principality, and made incursions on the territories of neighbouring Rajpoot chiefs to support her troops, for the country was rendered destitute of regular revenue, and they, like others, had no resource but plunder

The son of Anund Row died, but his mother, sanctioned by the Hindu law, and by the concurrence of neighbouring princes*, immediately adopted her sister's son, who was of about the same age, and seated him on the Musnud, under the name of Ramchunder Puar Moraree Row, after several vicissitudes, was ultimately compelled

* Both Dowlet Row Sindia and Jeswunt Row Holkar concurred in this adoption

to leave the country, and soon after died. The district of Kooksee was wrested from Dhar by the Mukranee chief Moozuffer, who, having settled with a body of his countrymen in the strong country of Ally Mohun, situated between Guzerat and Dhar, had made himself formidable to the latter, and several other petty states, on the plunder of which he in fact subsisted. The Guzerat troops of Seetaram almost all retired to that province. Detachments of Sindia's entered the Dhar territories to levy contributions; and within the last five years it has been subject to frequent predatory attacks from the Pindarries, and the different leaders of Holkar's army.

At the commencement of the year in which the British troops entered Malwa, Dhar was the only possession that remained to Ramchunder Puar, and the whole revenues of the principality did not amount to more than thirty-five thousand rupees, but, while Meenah Baee and her adopted son lived in the fortress, Bappoo Raghunauth, with a rabble of an army, amounting to eight or nine thousand men, plundered the country, and levied contributions from Doonguhpoor to Nemaour. The advance of the British armies afforded advantages which were not neglected. Dowlet Row Sindia was opportunely reminded of the gross injustice of his keeping the district of Budnawur, after the money it had been pledged for was paid. His aid to recover Bersiah from

the Pindarry chief Kurreem was also solicited, and it was intimated, that should he refuse compliance, the Puar prince must seek justice from the British government, now the arbiters of India. The court of Gualior was not at that moment willing such a reference should be made. Budnawur was given back, and a promise made by Sindia's government to use its influence in effecting the recovery of Beisiah. But the latter district, from its being occupied by Pindarries, fell an early conquest to the English arms. It was, however, granted to the family of Dhar, to whom the protection of the British government has been extended, in a manner which has already restored their distracted and wasted country to a condition of order and tranquillity.

The revenues of the petty state of Dhar will be hereafter noticed.

Raja Ramchunder Puar is a fine boy, twelve years of age. The regent Meenah Bae, who is still young in years, though old in the vicissitudes of life, entertains the most lively gratitude towards the British government; and Bappoo Raghunauth, the minister of Dhar, is now displaying as much zeal and energy in promoting cultivation and tranquillity, as he did two years ago in plundering the country, and disturbing the general peace. When this active and intelligent man was upbraided with his former practices, and asked how he could assemble and maintain an army of eight

thousand men, without the means of paying eight hundred, his answer* was prompt: "Can you contemplate what has occurred, and blame the foresight that succeeded, by keeping up the contest on any terms, in preserving the title to a principality? With respect to our being plunderers," he added, "there was no other class in Malwa. The course pursued was the only one left to protract the existence of this petty state; and we were from year to year in hopes that the extremity of misery to which the country was reduced would cause some great change. That has now occurred, and you will judge by the future, whether we are worthy of better fortune than we before enjoyed."

The Puars of Dewass, though their possessions are very limited, merit a short mention as chiefs of rank, and also from the singular construction of their power. The country they still enjoy was originally granted to two brothers, and has continued for more than a century in equal shares of both authority and revenue to their descendants.

It has been before stated, that Sevajee Puar had two grandsons, Sambajee and Kalojee †. The former, as has been related, was ancestor to the

* The answer from Bappoo Raghunauth is taken from my notes of the first conference I had with him.

† The Puars of Dewass have given me an account of the family, by which Kalojee is stated to be the elder brother.

princes of Dhar Kalojee's two sons, Tukajee and Jewajee, came with Bajerow into Malwa, and in the subsequent division of that province, they obtained possession of several districts * This family afterwards received the grant of a district in Bundelcund†, and of one in Hindustan‡ These two latter possessions they have lost; but the remainder have continued (though often overrun, and at times usurped, by other powers) in the family Though their name always obtained them some respect from their more powerful Mahratta neighbours, the Puars of Dewass have suffered, throughout the last thirty years, the extreme of misery They have been, in fact, the sport of every change With territories situated in the most distracted part of Central India, and unable to maintain any force, they have alternately been plundered and oppressed, not only by the governments of Sindia and Holkar, but by the Pindarry chiefs, and indeed every freebooter of the day A detail of their history during the last twenty-five years leaves an impression of wonder at their being in existence, or having an inhabited village in their country But all that belonged to them in Malwa is now restored§,

* The districts first ceded to the sons of Kalojee were Dewass, Sarungpoor, and Allote, in Malwa

† Hummerpoor

‡ Kundelah

§ Sarungpoor, which had been seized by Sindia, was

and their petty principality (under the protection of the British government, which has concluded a treaty with them,) is rising into prosperity, and promises at an early period a larger revenue than they have ever yet enjoyed

The first chiefs of Dewass had a quarrel, which led to a division of lands and villages; but the original union of power and authority has been revived in their descendants. Tukajee, the elder of the present Rajas, is the grandson of Tukajee, one of the first possessors, while Anund Row, his cousin, is the adopted son of the grandson of Jewajee. They are equal in rank and pretensions, and share equally in all receipts. An inquiry was made into their exact relations, to ascertain how they were to be treated in points of form and ceremony. It was explained by one of their officers saying with a smile, "If a lime is presented by a villager, it must be cut into equal parts and divided between our two Rajas." It was early found, that, though their chiefs were personally on good terms, their principal servants often came in collision, and in making arrangements for their future welfare, a primary object was to induce them to appoint one minister. To

restored to the Puars of Dewass at the conclusion of the Pindarry war. Their other possessions in Malwa, though desolated, had not been alienated

this they agreed*, and the nomination of a respectable old servant of the family to this office, has tended greatly to the improvement of their territories

* The arrangement was facilitated by the hereditary minister of one of these Rajas being a minor

CHAPTER V

Family of Sindia

THE family of Sindia are Sudras of the tribe of Koombee, or cultivators. Ranojee Sindia, the first who became eminent as a soldier, had succeeded to his hereditary office of head man, or Potal, of Kumeikerrah in the district of Wye, before he was taken into the service of the Paishwah Ballajee Bishwanath, after whose death he continued in that of his son Bajerow Bullal. The humble employment of Ranojee was to carry the Paishwah's slippers; but being near the person of the chief minister of an empire in any capacity, is deemed an honour in India. The frequent instances of rapid rise from the lowest to the highest rank led men of respectability to seek such stations, and it is probable that ambition, not indigence, influenced the principal officer of a village to become, in the first instance, the menial servant of Ballajee Bishwanath. Ranojee's advancement, however, is imputed to accident. It is stated*,

* This anecdote receives confirmation from a letter of Captain Stewart, Acting Resident at Sindia's court, dated 3d

that Bajerow, on coming out from a long audience with the Sahoo Raja, found Ranojee asleep on his back, with the slippers of his master clasped with fixed hands to his breast. This extreme care of so trifling a charge struck Bajerow forcibly: he expressed his satisfaction, and, actuated by motives common to men in the enjoyment of such power, he immediately appointed Ranojee to a station in the Pagah, or body-guard. From this period his rise was rapid; and we find him, when Bajerow came into Malwa, in the first rank of Mahratta chiefs, subscribing a bond of security to the Emperor Mahomed Shah for the good conduct of his master. Ranojee appears to have been a very enterprising active soldier. His expenses went far beyond his means; and he was indebted for considerable pecuniary aid to Mulhar Row Holkar, with whom he formed an intimate connexion. He died in Malwa, and was interred near Shujahalpoor, at a small village called from him Ranagunge.

Ranojee Sindia had been married in the Decan to a woman * of his own tribe, by whom he had three sons, Jeypah, Duttagee, and Jut-

September, 1819 “ Ranojee (he observes) is stated, after he “ was promoted, to have carried with him carefully packed “ in a box, a pair of the Paishwah’s old slippers, which he “ never ceased to regard with almost religious veneration as “ the source of his rise ”

* Her name was Meenah Baee

tobah; the two eldest of whom became distinguished commanders *

He had also two sons by a Rajpoot woman, a native of Malwa, Tukajee and Madhajee Sindia; the latter of whom became the head † of the family His character early developed itself; and his rise to a station, to which he had no right from birth, does not appear to have been disputed This chief was present at the battle of Paniput He fled from the disastrous field, but was pursued to a great distance by an Afghan, who, on reaching him, gave him so severe a cut on the knee with a battle-axe, that he was deprived for life of the use of his right leg His enemy, content with inflicting this wound, and stripping him of some ornaments and his mare, left him to his fate He was first discovered by a water-carrier, of

* Jeypah, who had been employed upon the earliest expeditions to Malwa, was, after many vicissitudes of fortune, massacred at Nagpoor by two Rhattore Rajpoots, employed by Bajee Singh, Raja of Joudpoor, against whom he was advancing at the head of a large force Duttajee, who had accompanied Ragonauth Row in his conquests as far North as Lahore, was defeated and slain on the plain of Rudber, near Delhi Juttobah, the younger brother, died at Kamber, near Deeg in Hindustan

† Junkajee, the son of Jeypah, succeeded to be the head of the family on the death of Ranojee, but he was slain at Paniput almost immediately after his accession to power

the name of Rana Khan*, who was among the fugitives this man, placing him upon his bullock, carried him towards the Deckan Madhajeel used frequently to recount the particulars of this pursuit His fine Deckany mare carried him a great way ahead of the strong ambling animal upon which the soldier who had marked him for his prey was mounted, but, whenever he rested for an interval, however short, his enemy appeared keeping the same pace, at last his fatigued mare fell into a ditch He was taken, wounded, spit upon, and left He used to say to the British Resident at his Court, the late General Palmer, that the circumstance had made so strong an impression upon his imagination, that he could not for a long time sleep without seeing the Afghan and his clumsy charger pacing after him and his fine Deckany mare †

The survivors of the Mahiattas fled from the field of Paniput to the Deckan, and for a period the nation seemed stunned with the effects of that dreadful day †; but the return of Ahmed Shah

* His service was gratefully rewarded Rana Khan, the water-carrier, was afterwards styled the Bhaee, or brother, of Madhajeel Sindia, raised to the first commands in his army, and afterwards loaded with favours His grandson (a weak young man) still enjoys some of the Jahgeers that were granted to his ancestor

† Few actions have been attended with greater carnage The lowest at which the loss of the Mahratta army is esti-

FAMILY OF SINDIA

Abdallee to Cabul, and the contests among the Mahomedan nobles for the different provinces of the dissevered empire, enabled them to reoccupy Central India, and again overspread Hindustan.

The family of Sindia, with that of other Mahratta chiefs, had lost by the battle of Paniput their possessions in Hindustan and Malwa. Madhaje Sindia, however, independently of his being the most distinguished leader of the household horse * of Ballajee, who had succeeded his father Bajerow in the imperial office of Paishwah, had entertained a large military establishment of his own; and the death of Mulhar Row, the founder of the family of Holkar, which took place three years after the defeat of Paniput, made him the first in power of the Mahratta military chiefs. His behaviour on the occurrence of Mulhar Row's death was generous towards the family. When Ragobah, the uncle of the Paishwah †, desired to coerce Ahalya Baee, the widow of Mulhar Row's son, and the representative of the family, into an arrangement that would have destroyed its power,

mated is more than two hundred thousand men, half of whom were slain, and the moral effect was still greater. The armies of the nation had collected for the struggle, and defeat was for a moment felt as the annihilation of their power

* Pagah

† Madhoo Row, son of Ballajee

Madhajee *, though he offered his personal service as belonging to the household troops of the Paishwah, refused to command the army which he had collected independently of that prince, to act against the family of so distinguished a leader. His example was followed by Jannojee Bhonslah of Nagpoor, and the designs of Ragobah were frustrated

The Mahrattas having, three years after the A D 1764 battle of Paniput, collected an army of considerable force†, marched into Hindustan, under Visajee Krishna‡, who commanded on the part of the Paishwah, and received a nominal obedience from Madhajee Sindia. But that chief had now commenced his own plans for forming a separate, if not independent sovereignty. He had succeeded to all those assignments of lands made to his father to pay the troops of the family; and both in Central India and Hindustan, Raja after Raja was laid under contribution, and district after district added to the territory he governed, in the name

* It may be doubted whether this conduct was altogether gratuitous. Ahalya Bae had come into the possession of a full treasury, and there is reason to believe she used some of its contents, with other means, to gain the friendship of Madhajee Sindia and the Bhonslah on this emergency.

† This expedition was directed against Nujeeb ud Dowlah, who had succeeded to the management of affairs at Delhi, which he conducted in the name of the weak Shah Allum.

‡ Visajee Krishna was long Beenee Wallah, or quarter-master-general of the Mahratta armies

of the Paishwah; and although the share of the latter in these possessions was only nominal, his commands were made the pretext of exactions and conquests, from which his own territories were not exempt; for Madhajeo Sindia took full advantage of the dissensions that occurred at Poona after the death of Ballajee, to usurp, as far as he could, the rights and lands of the head of the empire to the North of the Nerbudda. The detail of the progress of this system of spoliation of both friend and foe is not necessary: suffice it to say, this able chief was the principal opposer of the English in the war they carried on in favour of Ragobah. He was the nominal slave, but the rigid master, of the unfortunate Shah Allum, Emperor of Delhi, the pretended friend, but the designing rival, of the house of Holkar, the professed inferior in all matters of form, but the real superior and oppressor, of the Rajpoot princes of Central India; and the proclaimed soldier, but the actual plunderer, of the family of the Paishwah.

Although by the treaty of Salbaee, Sindia was recognized, as far as related to the British government, an independent prince, he continued to observe, on all other points which referred to his connexion with the Poona government, the most scrupulous attention to forms*. When he became

* Madhajeo Sindia originally transacted all affairs in the name of the Paishwah, and not only his ministers, but all his

master of Shah Allum and his capital, he made the degraded Emperor sign a commission appointing the Paishwah vicegerent* of the empire, and received from the head of the Mahratta state one as his Deputy in that high office, but when he came to Poona, during the rule of the second Madhoo Row, a scene was exhibited, which stands perhaps alone amid all the mummery to which the mock humility of artful and ambitious leaders has resorted to deceive the world. The actual sovereign of Hindustan from the Sutleje to Agra, the conqueror of the princes of Rajpootana, the commander of an army composed of sixteen battalions of regular infantry, five hundred pieces of cannon, and one hundred thousand horse, the possessor of two-thirds of Malwa and some of the finest provinces in the Deckan, when he went to pay his respects to a youth who then held the

public servants, even to his Chobdars, or mace bearers, were called the Paishwah's, but during the minority of Sevae Madhoo Row, when Nana Furnavese was Dewan, all Sindia's possessions South of the Chumbul were made over to his direct authority. In the conquests made North of the Chumbul, the Paishwah's name was used, and two principal officers from Poona attended Madhaje to guard the interests of the chief of the empire. On first entering Hindustan, some grants were made in the Paishwah's name, but when the latter was nominated Vakeel ul Moolik at Delhi, these were recalled, and regular Sunnuds given in the name of the Emperor with the seal of the Paishwah as Minister, and of Madhaje as his Deputy.

* Vakcel ul Moolik

office of Paishwah, dismounted from his elephant at the gates of Poona; placed himself in the great hall of audience below all the Mankarnies, or hereditary nobles of the state; and when the Paishwah came into the room, and desired him to be seated with others, he objected on the ground of being unworthy of the honour, and, untying a bundle that he carried under his arm, produced a pair of slippers, which he placed before Madhoo Row, saying, "This is my occupation, it was that of my father" Madhaje, at the moment he said this, took the old slippers* the Paishwah had in use, which he wrapped up carefully, and continued to hold them under his arm; after which, though with apparent reluctance, he allowed himself to be prevailed upon to sit down. This was not the only instance in which Madhaje Sindia professed to feel pride, instead of shame, at the recollection of the origin of his family, as well as of its first occupations. He had added to their property as Mahratta Ryots in the Deckan, by some purchases, and he desired to be called by the title he derived from his humble inheritance. The feeling was national, and made him popular; but he had, no doubt, other motives: these indeed are described in a common saying in India, "that Mad-

* These old slippers, Captain Stewart was informed, were carefully preserved by the successor of Madhaje Sindia

“hajee Sindia made himself the sovereign of an empire, by calling himself a Potal, or head man of a village.” But, though we may smile at a conduct which appeared an endeavour to reconcile stations and duties that were incompatible, it must be confessed, that this able chief was throughout his life consistent in the part he acted, which appeared more natural, from the manly simplicity of character which led him equally to despise the trappings of state and the allurements of luxury His actions were suited to the constitution of the society he was born in, which had a just pride in his talent and energy, and esteemed him one of the ablest, as he was the most successful, of Mahratta leaders Though Madhaje, following the example of the first statesmen of his nation, was content with the substance of power, and left others to wear its robes, there are strong grounds to conclude, that at one time he cherished the intention of giving to his vast possessions a more compact and permanent form But this plan, if he ever entertained it, was frustrated. His career (which was one of constant action) was marked by many acts of violence and oppression, but he was nevertheless a man of a mild disposition, and particularly desirous of improving the countries he had conquered or usurped His ambition was, however, restless, and, tempted on one hand by the dissolution of the Moghul empire, and on the other by the weakness and distraction

of the chiefs of his own nation, he extended his territories and influence too widely, and too rapidly, to admit of their being well managed.

Madhajeo Sindia continued through life to retain many Mahrattas in his service ; but, as he was, during the greater part of it, engaged in wars to the North of the Nerbudda, these were soon outnumbered by Rajpoots and Mahomedans. This was, though unmarked at the moment, a serious departure from the first principles of the Mahratta confederacy, and the habits of that nation were thus given to a population acting from a different impulse, and with few congenial feelings. But the policy of Madhajeo carried the change a step farther. His genius saw, that, to realize his plans, the mere predatory hordes of the Mahrattas could never prove adequate. It was a circle of plunder ; and, as one country was exhausted, the army had to march, with numbers increased by those whose condition their success had made desperate, to ravage another. They had, in their first excursions, little or no means of reducing forts ; nor did their system of war admit of protracted hostilities in a difficult country, and against a resolute enemy. These wants were early discovered by their enemies. The Bheels from their mountains, and the Rajpoots and others from their strong holds (which were multiplied by fortifying every village), not only resisted, but retorted upon the Mahrattas, by lay-

ing waste their lands, the wrongs they had suffered. This evil was only to be remedied by a regular force. We are distinctly informed, that its existence led Madhajeo Sindia to determine upon the measure he now adopted, of raising some corps of infantry; and accident gave him the aid of a man of no ordinary description. De Boigne, who entered his service at this period, is said to have been brought by chance to the notice of Madhajeo, who discovered in the author of a plan to frustrate his operations against Gohud, that military genius, which was afterwards to raise him to a greater, if not a more consolidated* power, than any Indian prince had attained since the death of Aurungzeeb.

Madhajeo, accompanied by the brigades, or Campoos, as they were termed, of De Boigne, took forts and fought pitched battles, in a manner that the Mahrattas never before attempted. Not merely the petty disturbers of the peace of Hindustan and Central India were attacked and subdued, but the proud spirit of the higher Rajpoot

* His regular troops were increased from two battalions to eight, and afterwards to sixteen, with eighty pieces of artillery and a corps of well-appointed cavalry. The pay and equipments of this army were liberally fixed, and the successive proofs which they gave of their superiority led to arrangements, which made this body of men for a long period more efficient than any one of a similar nature that had ever been formed by a native prince in India.

states was completely broken. The battle of Meirtah, which was fought against the collected* force of Joudpoor, was a great triumph, and fixed the ascendancy† of Madhajeel over that principality and the neighbouring weak state of Odeypoor, the prince of which had twenty years before been compelled to make over some of his most fertile possessions‡ to the families of Sindia and Holkar. Soon after the battle of Meirtah, De Boigne fought an action with the troops of Jeypoor. To these victories were added the defeat of Junkajee Holkar, and the destruction of four corps of regular infantry under a French§ officer in the service of that chief. Before this last action took place, Madhajeel Sindia had left Malwa, and arrived at Poona, where he died in A D 1794

* Two thousand horse of the tribe of Chundawut, of the Marwar army, made the only effort on this memorable day. They actually cut through De Boigne's corps, but were, when rallying to return, almost destroyed by grape, A D 1790

† Beeja Singh, who was ruler of Marwar when the battle of Meirtah was fought, was the same prince who had directed the murder of Jeypah Sindia, and independent of the tribute now exacted, a cession of the district of Ajmeer was demanded and made as the price of the blood of that leader

‡ In A D 1771, Jowud, Neemutch, Ruttenghur, Khonee, and Byjpoor, were made over to Madhajeel Sindia. Bam-poor, Rampoor, Mulhargurh, and the Pertaubgurh tribute were given to the government of Holkar. The amount of these cessions is computed at seventy-five lacks of rupees.

§ The Chevalier Dudernaie, commander of this corps,

The great object of Madhajee Sindia was to give a more permanent shape to his government than had ever belonged to that of a Mahiatta chief. He generally resided in Hindustan, but sometimes came to Malwa, and remained for a short time at Oojein. The countries under his own observation were well managed, as were all those where the inhabitants were peaceable and obedient, but in his efforts to reduce the chiefs of Hindustan, the princes of Rajpootana, and the petty Rajas of Central India, to the state of subjects, he let loose all the irregular violence of his army, and the proceedings of some of those he employed* to complete the subjugation of the Rajpoots, were marked by a spirit of rapacity and oppression, that has, perhaps, never been surpassed even in the annals of the Mahiattas.

Madhajee Sindia had been the enemy of the British, but he was not insensible to the benefit he derived from that nation's acknowledging him as an independent prince, which was done by the terms of the treaty† of Salbaee, and by keeping a

escaped, but every other European officer was either killed or wounded.

* Ambajee Ingiah, who was one of Sindia's principal officers employed in Rajpootana, though he oppressed the princes and chiefs of that country, was kind and considerate to the inhabitants. It was on his departure that the scene of devastation commenced.

† This treaty, which was negotiated by Mr David An-

resident at his court. These circumstances, however, could not make him indifferent to the rapid growth of a foreign power, and it is probable that the materials he collected for empire were formed into the shape he gave them, with a hope that they might one day prove sufficient to arrest its progress. He refused to become a party to the treaty of Poona, and when Lord Cornwallis was before Seringapatam*, he arrived at that city, with (it was conjectured) no friendly

der son, has been often alluded to as furnishing an extraordinary proof of the "Anomalous Government of the Mahrattas, from Sindia, a military chief subordinate to the Paishwah, becoming guarantee for the latter's conduct." But at this period the actual condition of the state warranted the assumption of Madhajee. The infant Paishwah was in the hands of a Dewan, Nana Furnavese, who was, like Sindia, a functionary of the state. It was in fact a guarantee, by the leading military chief of the Mahratta empire, of the conduct of one of the principal officers, and done with the latter's advice and concurrence, and, after all, Madhajee Sindia had the precedent of his father, who was one of the four principal chiefs who became in A. D. 1743 guarantee to the Emperor Mahomed Shah, that the Paishwah Ballajee, then in the plenitude of power, should not infringe the engagement into which he had entered with the sovereign of Delhi.

* Madhajee Sindia had a short time before proposed to become a party in the confederacy against Tippoo, on condition that the British government would grant two battalions to accompany him to Poona, "engage to defend his possessions in Hindustan, and aid him in his wars with the Rajpoot states." This proposition was rejected.

feeling to the British nation. Whatever were his designs as relating to the English, he did not live to carry them into execution, and his great power devolved, before it was well consolidated, upon a successor little equal, from his extreme youth, to complete the arduous task he inherited.

Madhajeë Sindia had no sons; his brother Tukajëe had three*, of whom the eldest died without issue, the second had two; the youngest, Anund Row, became the favourite of his uncle, who, in consequence of his affection to him, adopted his son, Dowlet Row Sindia, as his heir. This prince was only thirteen years of age when his grand uncle died, and left him not only his vast possessions, but an army which rendered him the arbiter of the Mahratta empire. The succession of Dowlet Row was disputed by the widows of Madhajeë, who proclaimed another prince, and, having assembled an army, did not give up the contest till they had been defeated in several actions. The territories of the Sindia family in Central India, which were at the death of Madhajeë Sindia nearly the same as at present, were comparatively a small portion of the dominions inherited by Dowlet Row, the foundation of whose power was laid in Hindustan. The greatest part of his regular army subsisted on the revenues of that country, and upon the

* Kcbanjee, Joteeb, and Anund Row

FAMILY OF SINDIA.

tributes which its discipline and efficiency enabled it to collect from the princes of Rajpootana. The government of Holkar, which had declined from the death of its founder Mulhar Row, had been expelled from all share in the territories North of Jeypoor. Its title to the tribute of that country, however, was still recognized, but this, as well as the preservation of its possessions in Malwa, was owing, in the latter years of Madhajeo Sindia, less to any power the Holkar family possessed of maintaining its rights, than to the ties which still subsisted between Mahatta chiefs, and which were not forgotten, even in the hour of battle. This national feeling gave a peculiar feature to their occasional contests with each other, which frequently terminated in a way that was unintelligible to those who did not understand the character and construction of the confederacy. The value of this disposition to reunion, when apparently in the most broken and divided state, had been fully appreciated by Madhajeo Sindia, and he maintained, sometimes by great sacrifices, all those bonds and relations upon which it depended. When in the plenitude of power, he did not deny the justice, though he evaded, by a counter-statement of expenses, the payment of the large demands made upon him by Nana Furnavese, for the Paishwah's share of the revenues of Malwa and Hindustan, and of the tributes he had collected. He is said to have discharged part of a large debt

his father owed to the house of Holkar , and when a dispute about their respective shares of the tributes led to his troops attacking those of Tukajee at Lakheree, no advantage was taken of the latter's defeat, beyond the favourable settlement of the point in dispute, and we find Madhajee immediately afterwards in the most amicable and intimate intercourse with this chief But sentiments and conduct such as have been described could not be expected in his successor Born and educated at a distance from the Deckan, surrounded by Europeans, Mahomedans, and Rajpoots, and despising, when contrasted with his disciplined bands, the irregular and predatory hordes, whose activity and enterprise had established the fame of his ancestors, Dowlet Row Sindia was, and considered himself, more the principal sovereign of India, than a member of the Mahratta confederacy Some national feelings were still cherished by the high hereditary officers of his government , but their attachment to the former usages and rules of the empire was unequal to resist the growing influence of the Rajpoot and Patan soldiers, who constituted the bulk of his army, and whose commanders were among the first rank of his counsellors

During the life of Madhajee Sindia, though intrigues were in progress among the different Mahratta chiefs for the management of the affairs of the Paishwah, whose power had for a long period, like that of the Sahoo Rajas, become

nominal, no open rupture took place, and the peace of the country was preserved. The war undertaken against the Nizam promised to their united efforts so easy and rich a booty, that it proved, for the few months it continued, a bond of union; but this short campaign soon terminated in a convention, by which the Nizam, in alarm for his person and family, purchased safety at an enormous sacrifice of territory and treasure. This great success was immediately followed by a scene of intrigue, art, and treachery, which is, perhaps, unparalleled. The principal of those events which may be enumerated as its causes and consequences, were, the unfortunate fate of the young Paishwah Madhoo Row*, the death of Tukajee Holkar, the imprisonment of Nana Furnavese, the murder of Puiseiam Bhow, and the release of Azim ul Omrah, prime minister of the Nizam, who had been given as an hostage for the performance of his master's engagements. During the contests that ensued between the different chiefs, the Poona territories were laid waste, and all the miseries which the predatory bands of the Mahiattas had inflicted upon other countries, were now retaliated by the inhabitants of Central India and Hindustan; for of such (as has been before stated) the armies of both Holkar and Sindia were almost entirely composed.

* He fell, or threw himself, from a high wall of his palace, and was killed on the spot.

The youth of Dowlet Row Sindia has been stated as an excuse for his early abuse of power, but his unfortunate marriage with the daughter of Surjee Row Ghatkia (which happened at this period), by placing that designing and wicked man at the head of his councils, was, perhaps, the chief cause of the shameless and bold incapacity which marked the commencement of his reign. The seizure of Nana Furnavese in violation of the most sacred pledges, the murder of several Brahmins (among whom was the brother of Nana), the plunder* of the inhabitants of Poona and the principal places in its vicinity, the giving his aid to Casee Row Holkar to slay his brother Mulhar Row, and the confinement of Kunder Row, the infant son of the latter chief, were among the crimes of this prince before he left the Deckan. When he returned to Malwa, whither he was summoned by alarm at the growing power of Jeswunt Row Holkar, his conduct on every occasion shewed that his views of aggrandisement were unchecked by any of the scruples that had restrained his predecessor. He accepted, as has been stated, from the rebellious minister of Dhari, two provinces of the Puar princes, the whole of the Dewass territory was seized, and only restored on the payment of a fine.

* One of the chief pretexts was the expenses of Sindia's marriage with Baizee Bace, the daughter of Surjee Row Ghatkia.

Jeswunt Row Holkar had, before Dowlet Row Sindia reached Malwa, made himself master of Oojem, but was satisfied with exacting a large amount from its wealthy inhabitants, and he forbade its being plundered. But Sirjee Row Ghatkia, who commanded a force which a few months afterwards defeated Jeswunt Row, and took possession of Indore, sacked that city in the most merciless manner, and ordered its best houses to be burnt, after he had either murdered or pillaged of their property the greater part of its inhabitants. This profligate chief was well aided in the work of destruction by his friends the Pindarries, numbers of whom were at this period attached to Sindia's army. The district of Indore, and several others belonging to the Holkar family, were, on this occasion, placed under the management of Sindia's officers, without any form being observed either of resuming them in the name of the Paishwah, or of declaring the possession temporary, till the succession to the Holkar territory was settled. This was considered so offensive a departure from usage, that it united the adherents of the house of Holkar; for even those who were hostile to the character and pretensions of Jeswunt Row, saw nothing but the complete ruin of the family in the success of Dowlet Row Sindia.

The period of trouble,* as it is emphatically

* "Gurdee ka Wukht," or "the period of trouble," is the name given to the period from 1800 to 1818, that is, from

called, had now commenced in Central India, but the tide of intrigue and war was again turned to the Deckan. Jeswunt Row Holkar marched towards Poona, with the professed design of making the Paishwah, Bajerow, arbiter of the difference between the families of Holkar and Sindia. This movement compelled Sindia to leave Malwa. He first went to Boohhanpoor, from whence he sent a detachment to join Bajerow, and to maintain his preponderance in the councils of that prince. The arrival of Sindia's troops at Poona put an end to Jeswunt Row's hopes (if he ever entertained any) from the Paishwah, and his fear of being hemmed in between two armies, if Sindia advanced, led him to instant hostilities. A D 1802

The victory obtained by Holkar, his alliance with Amut Row, the flight of Bajerow, the treaty of Bassein, the interference of the British government, its war with the Mahratta leaders, Dowlet Row Sindia and Ragojee Bhonslah, are events that do not belong to this memoir. Suffice it to say, that Dowlet Row Sindia, after a vain trial of his strength against the British arms, had all his dreams of glory and ambition dispelled. The brigades* formed by De Bogue, and completed

the first appearance of Jeswunt Row Holkar, as the supporter of his family against Dowlet Row Sindia, till the destruction of the Pindarries, A D 1818

* The regular infantry brigades in the army of Dowlet

by Peiron, were destroyed; above five hundred guns, cast in the arsenals which scientific Europeans had established in his dominions, were taken; and he was compelled to purchase peace by the sacrifice of his finest possessions in Guzerat, Hindustan, and Bundelcund. This prince had still a large territory, and, however little his conduct merited it, the doubtful articles of the treaty of Sujee Anjengaum were favourably interpreted, and he gained by another engagement, concluded two years afterwards, a considerable addition to his dominions *

Subsequently to his making peace with the British government, the troops of Dowlet Row Sindia were constantly employed in reducing the numerous Rajas of Central India, and adjoining countries, who owed him allegiance or tribute. He was in general successful, many chiefs were coerced into complete submission, while others were destroyed, but the result of this warfare was to feed and excite that predatory and turbulent spirit, which now pervaded this unhappy country. The miseries which it had suffered from Pindaries and Rappoot plunderers soon ap-

Row Sindia, at the commencement of the war, consisted of seventy-two battalions, amounting, in the aggregate number of armed men, to forty-three thousand six hundred and fifty, with a large proportion of field artillery.

* The territories of Gohud, and the fort of Gualior, were given up by the treaty of peace concluded at Muttra, in 1805.

peared as a light evil, to what it was destined to sustain from the regular brigades, or Campoos, of its principal Rulers. Those of Sindia levied contributions indiscriminately on all the towns and villages through which they passed; and the constant state of mutiny these corps were in, from want of pay, made their oppression of the inhabitants more indiscriminate and insufferable.

The causes which made Dowlet Row Sindia so instrumental in dissolving the ties by which the chiefs who constituted the loose confederacy of the Mahratta nation were bound, have been stated. He afterwards attempted, in vain, to arrest the progress of British power by an union with Ragojee Bhonslah and Jeswunt Row Holkar. The feelings which had once supported such combinations no longer existed in any force. Bajerow, however, made a last effort to revive them, and there is ground to suppose that he succeeded to a very considerable extent. Dowlet Row Sindia could not but be secretly hostile to a state, by which he had been so humbled as the English, and he saw with satisfaction the increasing embarrassments of the war that nation was carrying on in Nepaul. But though his intrigues in that quarter, when discovered, were passed over with a generosity that must have made a strong impression, still he was not able to resist the call of the Paishwah, to whom there can be no doubt he promised support when that Prince determined on A D 1818 hostilities. But Sindia acted upon this occasion

more from the recollection than the existence of ties, and from a sense of distant, not proximate, danger, and such motives were not of sufficient strength to make a chief like him engage in a war, which, from the measures adopted to prevent his precipitating that step, must have commenced with the hazard of his sovereignty. He preferred the path of safety; and entered into an alliance, by which he engaged to combine his efforts with those of the British government in suppressing the predatory system, and restoring the general tranquillity of the country. That this was an act of necessity, not choice, there can be no doubt; and it has been since proved, that he secretly endeavoured to evade the performance of some of the engagements into which he had entered. But his situation was painful and difficult, and he was only able to preserve his dominions by a departure from all that is deemed honour* by the tribe to which

* The following is the literal translation of a letter from Bajerow to Dowlet Row Sindia, given to me in April 1818, with an assurance of its being a true copy of the original. It purported to be taken from an Ackbar, or paper of intelligence. "Your father Madhajee Sindia, agreeably to the orders of the Sircar, went to Delhi, was made a Vizier, and acquired a high reputation. He served us with his heart and soul. When you became his successor, you entered into alliance with the English thus you govern in Hindustan, and thus you shew your gratitude. In thus serving us, it is befitting you to put bangles on your arms, and sit

he belongs He merited on this account the indulgence and consideration with which he has been treated, and its effects have not been lost Dowlet Row Sindia, who is personally of a good disposition, and is now free from the counsellors who betrayed and corrupted his youth, sees in their true light the motives that have actuated the British government He appears already to have submitted to the great revolution that has occurred, and, viewing the struggle for superiority as past, is forward to recognize the paramount sway of the British government, and to benefit A D 1802 by its action being directed to the restoration and maintenance of internal tranquillity

“down like a woman After my power is destroyed, is it possible that yours should stand?”

Dowlet Row, the writer of this article adds, after having heard the above, remained in much distress during two hours, and then went to sleep he sent no answer

CHAPTER VI

Family of Holkar

THE family of Holkar are of the Dhoongu * or shepherd tribe. The first who obtained any eminence, or indeed rose above the class of peasants in which he was born, was Mulhar Row. His father is only termed, in the record given to the author by the present minister † at Indore, a respectable cultivator, or Ryot, of a village in the Deckan, called Hull ‡, from which this chief and his descendants take their name of Holkar, or more properly Hulkur §

* In Hindustan this family are usually described as Gadrees, or goatherds, which is a shade below a tribe of shepherds, to which they consider themselves to belong

† Tantia Jogh

‡ The village of Hull is in the Pergunnah of Phultin, in the Jahgeer of Nimbalkur. It is near a bridge on the Neva, and about five coss from Phultin, and twenty coss from Poona

§ Many of the principal Mahratta families derive their name from a compound similarly formed, from that of the village where they were born, and the substantive Kur, which signifies an inhabitant, as Nimbalkur, Pattun-Kur, &c

Mulhar Row was born near the end of the seventeenth century*. His father, whose name was Cundajee, died when he was between four and five years of age, and his mother, in consequence of some dispute with her husband's relations, removed to the house of her brother, Narainjee †, a respectable landholder ‡, who lived in Candeish. The first employment of his nephew marks the condition of Narainjee. Mulhar Row was for several years appointed to watch the sheep of the family, from which occu-

* I believe in A D 1693 there is no exact register or accurate account of births (except in their principal families) kept by the Mahrattas. They guess from events antecedent or subsequent to their birth. Had Mulhar Row been born a chief, his *Junnum Putee*, or the State of the Heavens, written by the astrologer at his birth, would have been kept. This is the usage among all Hindus of rank.

† He was usually called Narainjee Bargul. In a Persian manuscript in my possession, she is said to have carried her son to one of her brothers, called Mudkur, who resided at the village of Sasunt, but I follow in this place the paper given me by the present minister, Tantia Jogh, which I believe to be correct. Mudkar was the maternal uncle of the second Mulhar Row, the son of Tukajee, and the similarity of name has occasioned the mistake of the Mahomedan author.

‡ Narainjee is termed a Zemindar, which (though it has another signification when applied to an official person) usually means a man possessing property in land, however small, in his own right. He was an inhabitant of the village of Talandah in Candeish.

pation (according to a fable which belongs to the youth of almost all Hindus that have attained eminence) he was only released by the accident of a snake having been seen to interpose its crest or hood * between his face and the rays of the sun, as he lay asleep in the fields. This at first gave alarm, but was afterwards favourably construed, and, according to the family tradition, his uncle Narainjee, acting from the impression it made, placed him in a small party † of horse which he kept in the service of Kuddum Bandee, a Mah-ratta chief of rank. Whatever circumstances raised the young Holkar from the occupation of a shepherd to that of a soldier, he soon shewed that he possessed all the qualities necessary to acquire distinction in the latter. In one of the first actions in which he was engaged he slew a leader of Nizam ul Mulk. This exploit, and his extraordinary zeal and activity, brought him into early notice. His uncle, Narainjee, gave him his daughter ‡ in marriage; and, after a few years, his

* The snake was a Cobra de Capella, (*Coluber Naga*) a species which is deemed peculiarly sacred

† Twenty-five in number

‡ The name of this lady was Gotama Bacc, who afterwards rose to celebrity as the principal, and indeed only wife of Mulhar Row Holkar. Her family, that of Bargul, is now extinct. The brother of Gotama Bacc (whose name, like his father, was Narain) attained some eminence. He was in the service of the Raja of Odeypoor, who gave him the Pergunnah

increasing fame led the Paishwah, Bajerow, to take him into his own service, in which he was at once raised to the command of five hundred horse. This change of masters was with the entire concurrence of Kuddum Bandee, who rejoiced in the good fortune of the young shepherd, and the latter gave a marked proof of his gratitude, by assuming the colours* of the Bandee chiefs,

of Boodda, near Mundissor, as a Jahgeer, half of which he bestowed as a present on his sister, who immediately named the principal town of her share Mulhargurh, in honour of her husband, while her brother called the capital of his lands Narraingurh. At the death of Narainjee, this Jahgeer went to his son Bouj Row, who, on the countries around his Jahgeer being delivered over to the Mahrattas, became a Jahgeerdar of the Holkar family. Bouj Row died about thirty years ago, leaving the Jahgeer to his sons, Mogajee and Shumkur Row. It was resumed in the year 1805 by Jeswunt Row Holkar, and restored in 1807. Mogajee died A. D. 1813, leaving Narraingurh to Shumkur Row, who held it for two years, after which it was resumed, and Shumkur Row, who fled to the neighbouring fastness of Sattolce, gained a precarious livelihood by plundering. To induce him to leave off these incursions, two villages of his former Jahgeer were given him. Of these he was deprived after the peace of Mundissor, and the last of the family died a few months ago in extreme poverty.

* The standard is of a triangular shape, striped red and white, and surmounted by pennons or streamers of the same colours. The present representative of the once celebrated family of Bandee, is about twelve years of age. He fled some time ago from the persecution of the late Paishwah to Baroda, to beg a pittance for his support from the Guickwar, whose ancestors owe, in a great degree, their rise to his family.

which still remain the standard of the Holkar, as they are of the Guickwar family, who were originally followers of the same leader

The progress of Mulhar Row Holkar to high command was rapid. Shortly after he entered the Paishwah's service, he was detached with the Paishwah's brother* to the Concan, in the subjection of which they were very successful. Bassein, and many other places of reputed strength in that quarter, were wrested from the Portuguese. The fame that Mulhar Row acquired on this occasion was subsequently increased by his conduct in a war with Nizam Ali Khan†, and on several lesser expeditions.

Mulhar Row Holkar received‡ his first lands North of the Nerbudda (twelve districts) in 1728, and in 1731 seventy additional districts were granted§ to this chief, who appears at the same time to have been nominated, by a letter from the Paishwah, to the general management|| of the

* Chinnajee

† Holkar acquired much distinction in an affair that took place at Rakisbon, and on the peace which followed he obtained several possessions. The Pergunnah of Ambah was granted at this time to the Holkar family.

‡ In the Roze Kurd, or Diary of the Poona Office, in A.D. 1728, we find the first grants of twelve Mahals to Mulharjee Holkar, and thirty-three to Oudajee Puar.

§ Poona Diary

|| It is mentioned in the Poona Diary, that in this year, 1730-1, the Paishwah wrote a letter to Mulhar Row Holkar,

Mahratta interests in Malwa, and in the ensuing year he commanded, as has been stated, the advance of the army which invaded that province, when Dia Bahadur was defeated and slain. Mulhar Row was, at the period above-mentioned, at the head of a considerable detachment, and obtained, before the Mahrattas ascended the Vindhyan mountains, possession of several places in Nemaour, of which the town of Mhysir was the principal. When Malwa was conquered, the district of Indore was assigned to him for the support* of his troops.

The high rank and consideration which Mulhar Row had now attained, have been before noticed, and are sufficiently proved, by his name being, as before related, in the deed of guarantee given by the principal military leaders to Mahomed Shah, as a security against the insincerity or perfidy of their superior, the Paishwah. He may, in fact, be deemed, from the invasion of Malwa till his death (a period of more than thirty years), the most distinguished of the military commanders† of the Mahratta empire, and he ap-

committing Malwa to his charge, and stating that he must regularly transmit the dues of the Sircar, &c. This employment was probably given him to check the growing ambition and insolence of Oudajee Puar.

* A D 1733 —It was, according to usage, a Serinjam grant, and revocable.

† He was, by an order of the Paishwah, associated with

pears, from his continual employment, to have been greatly favoured by Bajerow, to whose authority he continued, even in the zenith* of his power, to pay the greatest deference. The life of this leader, though he established his family and government in Central India, has little connexion with the history of that country. The Deckan and Hindustan, but especially the latter, were the scenes of his principal military achievements. In one of the first incursions of Bajerow into that region, he was among the chiefs who plundered the celebrated fair† at Kalka Bhowance, within fifteen miles of Delhi, where the weak Emperor Mahomed Shah was then residing. The Mahrattas on this memorable and bold incursion shewed their contempt of the Mahomedan power, by hanging a hog over the bridge near Humayoon's tomb. The booty they took was great, and Mulhar Row obtained on this occasion a share of wealth and fame, which completely compensated for the discomfiture he had sustained a

Ranojee Sindia, and directed to collect, on account of Sirdaismookhee and other Mahratta claims, thirty-five per cent of the revenue of Malwa. These chiefs pledged themselves to pay one lack and five thousand rupees the first year, one lack and ten thousand the second, and one lack and twenty-five thousand rupees the third and future years, to the Poona state, dividing the remainder between them equally

* Poona Diary

† Jattrā

few months before from the Imperial army*. The Paishwah, who had been secretly aided in the enterprise by Jey Singh, returned by the way of Kotah, and had an interview with that Rajpoot prince, who, with others of his tribe, agreed to transfer their tributes to the Mahrattas, and, on Bajerow's proceeding to the Deckan, the tasks of realizing this revenue, and of prosecuting military operations, were committed to Mulhar Row Holkar, to whom considerable tracts† were assigned for the maintenance of his increased contingent. There is little interest in the detail of the predatory warfare which this chief carried on in Malwa, Rajpootana, and Hindustan, it was, in fact, a series of petty actions and pillaging incursions. In one of the latter, he took the baggage of Malika Zemanah, the Queen of Mahomed Shah, and his family preserved with great care, until the death of Ahalya Bae, two substantial records of this Mahiatta victory over the property

* The Imperial army, commanded by Burhan ul Mulk, defeated Mulhar Row at Mootta Baug, near Agra, to which place he had come after ravaging part of the Duab. The Mahratta chief with difficulty escaped, and joined Bajerow at Gualior.

† His grant from the Paishwah for the support of his troops is stated in a manuscript in my possession to have amounted to forty lacks of rupees in Malwa, and twenty lacks in the Deckan, or Southward of the Satpoora range. The number of his contingent was fixed at fifteen thousand horse.

of a female, the one was a carriage*, the curtains of which were embossed with seed pearl, and the other a comb, richly ornamented with jewels, and worth above a lack of rupees

Mulhar Row Holkar, encouraged by the wretched condition of the Moghul empire, appears to have entertained the design of fixing the power of his nation permanently over Hindustan; and we find him, both alone, and in combination with other chiefs, endeavouring to effect this object, by operations which extended from the province of Oude to the Indus, and from the hills of Rajpootana to the mountains of Kumaon

- 1 The Vizier Sefdar Jung had, in the reign of Ahmed Shah, called in the Mahrattas to preserve Oude from the Rohillas, and, during the war that ensued, Mulhar Row Holkar particularly distinguished himself, by the night attack he made with a very small body of troops. His success on this occasion has been ascribed to an ancient stratagem.† He directed torches and lights to be tied to the horns of several thousand cattle, which were driven in one direction, while in another he placed lights upon every bush and

* This species of carriage, which is called a Ruth, or Hackery, has two low wheels, and is drawn by bullocks

† The similarity of this stratagem to that recorded of Hannibal is remarkable. Human invention has every where the same character, and this coincidence must be accidental, for

tree, and, when this was done, marched silently in the dark by a different route to the attack. The enemy, pressed in one quarter by an actual assault, and seeing lights in several others, thought themselves surrounded and in danger of destruction, they dispersed, and fled in dismay, leaving their camp to be plundered by the conquerors, whose leader acquired a just increase of fame from the victory, and, in recompense for his zeal and gallantry during the whole of the campaign, the Emperor granted him a deed for the Sirdaismookhee (a due of twelve and a half per cent on the revenue) of Chandore, which is the only royal grant in possession of the family. It is indeed stated, that when Mulhar Row Holkar was asked what reward he wished, he replied, that he was the officer of the Paishwah, and desired to have no country independent of him, but that a nomination to the office of Daismookh* of Chandore in Candesh would be acceptable. The request was complied with, and the family have ever since held the office. When the province of Candesh was recently ceded to the English government, a politic attention to the feelings of the house of Holkar led to a restoration of the title and immunities of the situation.

we cannot suspect the Mahratta chief of having read the history of the Carthaginian leader

* Daismookh is a Hindu compound term, signifying the head of the district

Mulhar Row Holkar had connected himself with Ghazee Udeen, one of the sons of Nizam ul Moolk, whom he accompanied to the Deckan to aid him in asserting his succession to the royal office (for such it had become) of Soobahdar, or viceroy, of that division of the empire; and the Paishwah, with the principal Mahratta chiefs, who had also engaged in the same enterprise, assembled at Aurungabad, from whence they were about to march, when the sudden death of Ghazee Udeen, by poison*, put an end to the expedition, and gave temporary peace to the Deckan

Invited by the weakness of the Mahomedan dynasty in Hindustan, the Paishwah again detached Mulhar Row Holkar to that quarter to maintain his interests, conferring on him the title of Soobahdar†, and furnishing him with considerable reinforcements. The annual invasions of the Afghans under Ahmed Shah Abdallee had now commenced, and the Mahattas were forced, as has been stated, to evacuate the Punjab. Dattojee Sindia was slain; and Mulhar Row, who had encamped at Secundia, after intercepting and plundering some supplies going to the camp of

* He was poisoned by his mother, whose desire to save another son, Nizam u'Dowlah, from destruction, impelled her to the horrid act

† The title of Soobahdar descended to his successors, and Dowlut Row Sindia, and other rulers, always addressed them by it as their highest distinction

Ahmed Shah, was himself surprised, and completely routed, by a corps of the Afghans. The occurrence of these events led to the battle of Paniput. The early escape of Mulhar Row, on a day so fatal to his nation, has given rise to some reproaches, but his advocates ascribe his safety to his superior knowledge as a leader, which made him, when he saw the action lost, keep his party together, and retreat with an order that none of the others preserved. This account will be more probable, if we credit the statement given of his quarrel with his commander, on the morning of the day on which the battle was fought. He had, it is affirmed, intreated Sedasheo Bhow to delay the action for one or two days, but the latter, whose pride and vanity exceeded all bounds*, impatient of the advice, exclaimed, "Who wants the counsel of a goathead?"† If the anecdote be true, we cannot wonder that a chief of Mulhar Row's character should not have anticipated success ‡

* Sedasheo Bhow used to allow his attendants to exclaim "Purseram Ootar," or an Incarnation of Vishnu, as one of his titles

† A nearly similar taunt lost the Mahratta commander the services on this day of one of his most efficient allies, Sooruj Mull, the Jaut Prince of Bhurtpoor

‡ The victory of Paniput, which is to be ascribed to the superior courage and energy of the Afghans, is naturally enough referred by the Mahrattas to other causes, and among these to the death of Biswas Row, the son of the Paishwah,

At all events he was one of the few that escaped ; and he retreated into Central India, where he employed himself in settling his possessions. These had been increased, in the mode usual to Mahiatta chiefs ; and, with the exception of one district*, all that now belongs to the Holkars in Malwa was bequeathed by their founder. Mulhar Row, who, besides his lands in that province, left extensive claims upon Rajpoot princes. Taking advantage of the disputes which occurred on the death of Jey Singh, he had established a considerable influence in the county of Jeypoor, and on the succession of Madhoo Singh, through his aid, the latter agreed to pay in money, besides an amount of seventy-six lacks†, and a cession of four districts‡, an annual tribute of three lacks and a half of rupees. Mulhar Row had before obtained large domains in the Deckan, and a considerable part of the province of Candesh had been allotted to him for the maintenance of his troops. Independently of these acquisitions, various grants

which was imprudently proclaimed to the army by the obstinate impatience of Sedashee Bhow, who made the elephant sit down, that he might see for the last time his favourite nephew

* Tal Mundawul, usurped from the Dhar family by Jeswant Row Holkar. The greater portion of it now forms part of Ghuffoor Khan's Jalgeer

† According to some statements eighty-four lacks

‡ Tonk, Rampoorah, Torah, and Pottah

of villages were given, both by the Paishwah and Nizam, as presents to females of his family

Mulhar Row was seventy-six years of age when he died, he had for more than forty years of his life been a commander of reputation, and during the latter part of this period was certainly one of the most distinguished in the Mahratta confederacy. His remains were interred at a place now named, in honour of him, Mulhargunge, in the district of Alumpoor, and about forty miles from Gualior. Although inferior to Madhaje Sindia as a statesman, Mulhar Row was his equal, if not his superior, as a warrior. For simplicity of manners, and manly courage, no Mahratta leader stands higher in the opinion of his countrymen, nor were his talents limited to those of a soldier. His administration of the countries subject to his direct control was firm, but considerate, and if we judge of his character by his conduct to the petty Rajpoot princes of Malwa, the conclusion will be favourable to his memory. He conciliated their respect, if not their regard, by his good faith and moderation* in the exercise of power. Many of them were his associates and adherents†, and

* He is stated to have reduced the tribute of Pertaubgurh to seventy-five thousand rupees, which, though as much as the chief of that petty state could pay, was not more than one half of what had been before assessed

† Among the principal of those chiefs who were his friends

their descendants still speak of his memory with sentiments of gratitude. This feeling, however, may owe much of its strength to the opposite conduct of some of his successors. The principal virtue of Mulhar Row was his generosity. He had personally no regard for money; he was wont to declare (probably with truth) that he understood nothing of accounts, and he listened with impatience to those ministers who recommended the diminution of his frequent largesses*. To his relations, and indeed to all Mahrattas, he was uncommonly kind. It is stated of this chief, that in his conduct to the Paishwah, and in the performance of all his duties as a member of the Mahratta confederacy, he did that from the heart, which Madhjee Sindia did from the head: the one was a plain, sincere soldier, and the other added to great qualities all the art of a crafty politician.

Mulhar Row Holkar had only one son, Kundee Row; who, some years before the battle of Paniput, was killed at the siege of Kumbhere†, near

and supporters as well as tributaries, were Bulbudder Singh, Raja of Ragoogurh, and Gokul Doss, Raja of Baglee.

* It is recorded of Mulhar Row Holkar, that, when pleased with a soldier's gallantry, he used to exclaim, "Fill his shield with rupees."

† Kumbhere is four coss from Deig, it lies between that place and Bhurtpoor, equally distant from each. Nawul Singh, grandson of Sooruj Mul, was at this period Raja of Bhurtpoor.

Deig This prince had married Ahalya Bae, of a family of the name of Sindia, by whom he had one son and one daughter To the former, whose name was Mallee Row, Ragobah Dada (the uncle of the reigning Paishwah, who was then commanding the Mahratta armies in Central India) immediately sent a Khelaut, or honorary dress, recognizing him by the act as successor to the power and possessions of his grandfather This youth, however, did not long enjoy the dignity, and his death, which occurred nine months after his elevation, was very melancholy He had been always

After he made peace with Mulhar Row, a Mausoleum, or Chetty, was built in honour of Kundee Row, and the revenue of five villages assigned as a charity for the support of the Brahmins who attend it, and pray for the deceased The feeling of all Mahrattas towards the Jauts of Bhurtpoor is strong, from a recollection, which still exists, of the protection the Raja of that place afforded their ancestors after the disastrous battle of Paniput He not only clothed and fed the fugitives who came to his territories, but furnished them with means of reaching their homes in the Deckan In consequence, there is hardly a family of any note in this nation that has not a tradition of a debt of gratitude to the Jauts of Bhurtpoor Such facts are important, as a knowledge of them often gives a very different colour to actions of political consequence It is, however, to be added, that, according to Mahratta system, this feeling did not prevent the chiefs of Bhurtpoor being laid under contributions, when their professed friends were able to compel them into payment

considered of weak and unsettled intellect, but no symptom of positive insanity had appeared before he came to the head of the government, when every action displayed it. His conduct was at first more marked by extremes of folly than of guilt. The life of his mother was devoted to acts of charity and benevolence, and she was particularly kind to Brahmins. This tribe became objects of Mallee Row's malicious ridicule. It was a common usage with him to place scorpions in clothes and shippers that he gave them; he also put these venomous reptiles in pots filled with rupees, which he invited the holy mendicants to take, and, when their eager cupidity caused them to be stung, his joy was as excessive, as the grief of the pious Ahalya Bacc, who used to lament aloud her hard destiny, in having a perfect demon born to her as a son. The avowed sentiments of his wickedness, and his incapacity for government, had given rise to a report*, that this admirable

* This report of the death of Mallee Row has been stated to several European inquirers, by whom it was believed. I thought it a duty, as connected with the memory of Ahalya Bacc, to make the most minute investigation of the fact, and the result has been a conviction of her complete innocence of a crime, which no circumstances could have excused. I have no doubt that she was led by horror at his cruel acts of insanity, and a despair of his recovery, to look upon his death as a fortunate event for him, herself, and the country, but such a feeling is an honour, instead of a disgrace, to her character.

woman hastened the death of her own offspring. Every evidence proves this to be false, and his death is referred by all that have been interrogated (and among them many were on the spot when it occurred) to the same cause. He had slain, in a jealous fury, an embroiderer, who, he believed, had formed an intimacy with a female servant of his family. The innocence of the man was established, and remorse for the crime brought on so severe a paroxysm of madness in Mallee Row as to alarm all for his life. It is a confirmed belief with many of the natives of India, that departed spirits have, on some occasions, the power of seizing upon, and destroying the living. It was rumoured, that the embroiderer was a man with supernatural power, that he warned Mallee Row not to slay him, or he would take terrible vengeance, and the ravings of the latter were imputed to the person he had murdered, and who, according to their preposterous belief, now haunted him in the form of a Jin, or demon. Ahalya Bae, satisfied of this fact, used to sit days and nights by the bed of her afflicted son, holding communion, as she thought, with the spirit that possessed him, and who spoke to her through his organs. She shed tears in abundance, and passed whole hours in prayer. In the hope of soothing the demon, she offered to build a temple to the deceased, and to settle an estate upon his family, if he would only leave her son. But all was vain,

—a voice still seemed to answer, “He slew me innocent, and I will have his life” Such is the popular tale of the death of Mallee Row; an event that only merits notice as connected with the history of Ahalya Bacc, whom it compelled to come forward to save from ruin the interests of the family she represented, and to exhibit in the person of a female, that combined talent, virtue, and energy, which made her, while she lived, a blessing to the country over which she ruled, and has associated her memory with every plan of improvement and just government in the province of Malwa

The daughter of Ahalya Bacc had been married into another family, and could therefore, according to Hindu usage, have no claim to participate in the administration of the Holkar sovereignty. Under these circumstances, Gungadhur Jeswunt, 1766 the Brahmin minister of the late Mulhar Row, strongly recommended, that some child (distantly related to the family) should be adopted to succeed Mallee Row, a plan which would have secured the continuance of his own authority as minister*. This proposition was combined with the offer of a large separate provi-

* Gungadhur Jeswunt held his station of Dewan, or Minister, to the Holkar family from the Paishwah. He had been nominated by Bajerow to that office with Mulhar Row, when the latter was first promoted to high command

sion for Ahalya Bae, whose abilities were admitted, but her sex objected to, as a disqualification for the conducting of public affairs Gunghadur at the same time proposed to give a considerable present* to Ragobah Dada, in the event of his agreeing to the arrangement, and promoting its execution This venal chief gave a ready assent to the measure, and his concurrence was considered by the minister so conclusive, that he waited upon Ahalya Bae, completely assured, that, if other motives failed, a despair of successful resistance would compel her to acquiesce; but he soon discovered his error He was told at once by this high-minded woman, that his plan was disgraceful to the house of Holkar, and should never have her consent, and she particularly disapproved of his intended gift to Ragobah, whose right of interference on the occasion she entirely rejected The heirs of Mulhai Row, she said, were extinct on the death of her son, and she had, as wife and mother of the two last representatives of the family, the exclusive privilege of selecting the successor,—and that just claim she was resolved, at all hazards, to maintain It is probable that Ahalya Bae had not only also consulted with her own principal adherents, but with the Mahratta military chiefs who

* This description of present to a superior is termed Nazarana

were in Malwa when these events occurred. Her whole conduct, however, at this crisis of her fortune, and of the Holkar government, shewed that her resolution had been seriously taken, and would be firmly maintained. On hearing that Ragobah was making preparations to compel her to compliance, she sent him a message, earnestly advising him not to make war on a woman, from which he might incur disgrace, but could never derive honour. She added, to give effect to this remonstrance, every preparation for hostilities. The troops of Holkar evinced enthusiasm in her cause, and she made a politic display of her determination to lead them to combat in person, by directing four bows, with quivers full of arrows, to be fitted to the corners of the howdah, or seat, on her favourite elephant. Ragobah seemed at first equally resolved to proceed to extremities, but all his followers were reluctant; and Madhajeo Sindia, and Jannojee Bhonslah, refused to unite with him, and an ungrateful minister, to subvert the independence of the Holkar family. These sentiments, and the arrival of a letter from the Paishwah Madhoo Row, to whom Ahalya Bae had referred, turned the scale completely in her favour. That prince directed his uncle to desist from all farther attempts against the respectable widow of Kunder Row, whose right to the management of affairs was indisputable. These injunctions were implicitly obeyed, and Ahalya

ment, to which much of the prosperity and reputation that afterwards attended her administration may be referred. She elected for the commander of her army, and to fulfil those duties which as a female she could not perform, Tukajee Holkar, a chief of the same tribe, but no way related* to Mulhar Row. Tukajee was highly esteemed as a soldier by that chief, and commanded the Pagah, or household troops, and, before he had reached his present power, had established a character, which he maintained through life, of a plain unaffected Mahratta soldier. Ragobah, after this arrangement, proceeded to Poona, and was invited to take the route of Mhysur, where he was most hospitably entertained by Ahalya Bae. She directed the contingent of the family to accompany him to the Mahratta capital, under the command of Tukajee, who, she desired, should in person receive from the Paishwah an honorary dress, and a commission, confirming him in his high station. All her wishes were complied with, and she in her turn restored, on the ground of his former services and high character, the minister Gunghadur to favour.

The divided authority established in the Holkar state, from the day of Tukajee's elevation, had a

* As this chief is the grandfather of the present representative of the house of Holkar, he is always termed, by the present minister and others, a relation of the great Mulhar Row, but this is not the fact.

FAMILY OF HOLKAR.

character which, judging from common rules, was not likely to admit of its subsisting a week, but it remained for above thirty years undisturbed by jealousy or ambition. This is to be ascribed to the virtue and moderation of the parties, to their respect for each other, and to then having distinct, and, generally speaking, distant spheres of action

Ahalya Bacc had chosen Tukajee to command the armies of the state, and to be the titled head of the sovereignty, after he had attained an age when the mind is confirmed in its habits. A partiality for her own choice made her very indulgent; and Tukajee seems never to have forgotten for a moment his original sense of obligation to his benefactress, besides which, the respect that her virtues and liberal piety had established over all India, had given her such a reputation, that to have treated her with neglect or ingratitude, much less to have returned her generosity with any usurpation of her property or rights, would have consigned him to general execration. It is but justice, however, to this manly soldier to declare, that he appears never to have needed the check of such considerations. Although for a time much under the influence of one of the principal ministers* of the government,

* The name of this man was Narroo Gunneiss. He is represented to have been an artful and ambitious Brahmin.

who was not favourably disposed towards Ahalya Bae, he never deviated from the path he first pursued. He was more than obedient. he was dutiful, and all his actions were directed to please and conciliate the princess, to whom he was solely indebted for his high station. He constantly called her his mother, but, as she was much younger than him, this relation was not engraved upon his seal. On that he was styled, by her command, "Tukajee, the Son of Mulhar Row Holkar"—These facts will appear still more extraordinary, when we advert to the manner in which the state was governed. When Tukajee was in the Deckan (and he remained there at one period for twelve years), all the territories of the family South of the Satpoora range, were managed by him, and the countries North of that limit were under Ahalya Bae, to whom the different tributaries also made their annual payments. While he was in Hindustan, (he never remained long in Malwa,) he collected the revenues of the countries that had been acquired there, and in Bundelcund, and also the tributes of Rajpootana. The districts in Malwa and Nemaui continued, as usual, under the direction of Ahalya Bae, and her authority was on such occasions extended over the possessions in the Deckan. The treasures of the family, which were very considerable, (said to have been two millions,) remained with Ahalya Bae, and she had, besides, personal

estates yielding annually above four lacks of rupees, which, with the hoard abovementioned, were entirely expended at her discretion ; while all the rest of the receipts were brought into a general account, and applied to the expenditure of the government. The accounts of receipts and disbursements were kept with scrupulous exactness ; and Ahalya Bacc, after paying the civil and militia* charges, sent the balance that remained in the public treasury, to supply the exigencies of the army employed abroad. Tukajee was, no doubt, from the distance at which he was placed, and the scenes in which he was engaged, often obliged to act for himself, but he is stated to have referred, on every occasion in which the general interests of the government were implicated, to Ahalya Bacc ; and in matters relating to peace or war, or to the foreign relations of the state, her supremacy was proclaimed by the envoys † of all the principal, as well as petty, rulers of India residing at her court : ministers, deputed directly from her, resided at Poona‡, Hyderabad, Seringapatam, Nagpoor, Lucknow, and Calcutta ; while inferior agents remained

* The term Sebundy, which means a local military, employed for the preserving of internal peace, and to aid in revenue collections, may be literally interpreted " Militia "

† Vakeels

‡ When Tukajee was in the Deckan, he was the medium of all intercourse with the Paishwah, but in his absence, Ahalya Bacc kept an intelligent agent at the court of Poona

at the courts* of the petty Rajas, particularly those from whom tribute was collected

It appears, from what has been related, that Ahalya Bae was the actual head of the government, and Tukajee, gratified by his high station and her complete confidence, continued, during her life, to exercise no duties beyond those of commander-in-chief of the army, and the collection of the revenues that his vicinity enabled him to realize with more convenience than any other agent of her administration. The servants of the Holkar government, who filled offices at the period, speak all the same language, and, with every disposition to praise Tukajee, strengthened by his grandson being on the throne†, they never go higher in their eulogium than to say, that he fulfilled all the expectations of Ahalya Bae, and was to the last hour of his existence attentive, faithful, and obedient.

It has been stated, that Tukajee went to Poona to attend the Paishwah, but his stay was short in the Deckan. While the behaviour of the Bhurtpoor Jauts, subsequent to the battle of Paniput, had excited gratitude in the minds of the Mah-rattas, that of many of the Mahomedan chiefs in Hindustan, and above all, of Nujeeb ud Dowlah ‡,

* Durbars

† Musnud

‡ To the courage and conduct of this celebrated chief, the victory of Paniput has been in a great degree attributed,

had inflamed the resentment of the discomfited nation. An attack upon Nujeebabad, the stronghold of the latter's family, was determined on; and a large army marched from the Deckan to carry it into execution. Tukajee was on the expedition, but acted only a subordinate part, being under the direction of Ramchunder Gunneiss*, who commanded on the part of the Paishwah. It appears from a Persian manuscript, that Tukajee opened a communication with Nujeeb Khan, on the ground of the ancient friendship that had subsisted between him and Mulhar Row Holkar, which was approved by Ramchunder, but reprobated by Madhajee Sindia, who asked if a peaceable settlement was to be substituted for the revenge which they had united to accomplish. "I require (he said) for the Paishwah the country "possessed by this chief and the Afghans. I "demand for myself the blood of my brother†, of "my nephews‡, and my own leg, of all use of "which I am deprived. Nor will I abandon my "hopes of vengeance, because Tukajee Holkar

and there can be no doubt he was the chief author of the combination among the Mahomedans, which produced that memorable result

* This chief is distinguished from another of the same name by his title of Beeneewalla, or quartermaster-general of the Mahratta armies. He had on this occasion above sixty thousand horse, of whom many were stated to be Pindarries

† Duttajee

‡ Junkajee and Sambajee

“ chooses to make a brother of this ‘Omiah You
 “ may write, however, (he added) to Madhoo Row
 “ at Poona, and if he sanctions by his command
 “ such proceedings, I am a servant, and shall
 “ obey ”* These sentiments did not prevent the
 counsel of Tukajee from being adopted It was
 thought best to take advantage of the good dispo-
 sition evinced by Nujeeb ud Dowlah, lest proceed-
 ing to extremities against so brave and popular
 a chief might again unite the Mahomedans, and
 it was farther foreseen, that peace with him would
 enable them to levy, undisturbed, tribute on the
 Jauts and Rajpoots, and increase their resources
 for future operations This policy was pursued,
 and a twelvemonth passed in plundering their
 Hindu friends† Nujeeb ud Dowlah was at this
 moment in the last stage of his existence He
 visited the Mahratta camp, and an attempt was Hejira 1185
 made to reconcile him with Sindia, but neither
 were sincere, and, a few weeks before Nujeeb ud
 Dowlah retired to his capital to die, he placed the
 hand of his son Zabita Khan in that of Tukajee,
 and requested his protection, anticipating the

* I translated this from a Persian manuscript, written for
 Sir Charles Malet, by Meer u Deen Hussein Khan, the father
 of the Nabob Kumal Udeen and given to me by the latter’s
 son, the present commander of the Guickwar horse in Malwa
 Meer u Deen was an actor in the scenes he describes

† Among these, Newul Singh of Bhurtpoor, for whom they
 professed such friendship, was the chief sufferer

ruin that was soon to overwhelm his family. The death of this Omiah removed the last barrier to the Mahatta conquest of Hindustan, the capital of which, and its finest provinces, they soon afterwards subjugated. They were aided in the accomplishment of this undertaking by the weak Shah Allum, who had left the protection of the British government to lend his name, and what little influence he still retained, to enable the enemies of his dynasty and religion to destroy the only Mahomedan chief who possessed sufficient energy to retard their progress. These events led, as has been stated, to the aggrandizement of Madhajeo Sindia, who soon became the real sovereign of Delhi and its surrounding territories; while Tukajee Holkar returned to Malwa, where he declined to the rank of a secondary chief before the rising fortunes of his able and more aspiring rival.

The death of the Paishwah Madhoo Row*, and the murder of his younger brother, Narram Row, by Ragobah Dada, called, at this period, all the Mahatta chiefs to the Deckan. The celebrated confederacy of Bariah Bhacee, or the twelve† brothers, as the chiefs were designated who combined

* Madhoo Row died the 18th November, 1772, and his brother, Narram Row, was murdered on the 30th August, 1773.

† I never could learn why the number twelve was used on this occasion to express, as it did, an indefinite number. With

against the murderer, was joined by Madhaje Sindhia and Tukajee Holkar, which involved these leaders in a war with the British government, whose name was, at this crisis of Mahatta history, associated with the cause of guilt and usurpation. The united chiefs proclaimed Madhoo Row, the posthumous son of Narrain Row, Paishwah, but the real power of that high station devolved on Ballajee Junaidun, commonly called Nana Furnavese, an able Brahmin, who acted a prominent part in forming the combination against Ragobah. The results of this combination have been noticed. The treaty* of Salbaee confirmed the triumph of those by whom it had been effected.

Tukajee Holkar appears acting a very conspicuous part in a war which the Poona government, aided by the Nizam, carried on against Tippoo Sultan; and he proceeded, the year after it was concluded, to Mhyssur, to pay his respects to Ahalya Baee. There, however, his stay was short, as he was called upon to take a share in the opera-

A D
1785-6

the attachment to usage that marks the Mahrattas, the term Barrah Bhaee has been continued, as denoting combination, and a body of Mahratta horse now in the service of Holkar, composed of parties of different chiefs, is distinguished by this appellation.

* A treaty was concluded by Colonel Upton in 1776, but hostilities recommenced, and the war was not terminated till the treaty of Salbaee.

tions which terminated in establishing the power of Ali Bahadur*, the natural son of Bajerow, over a great portion of Bundelcund, and that of Madhajeo Sindia over the whole of Hindustan. The force of Tukajeo bore no proportion to that of the latter chief; and he consequently derived little benefit from these conquests. The claims of the family of Holkar to an equal share were advanced and nominally admitted, and at a settlement of accounts† some districts were granted to liquidate the acknowledged balance in their favour; but the predominating control of Madhajeo prevented any benefit from the cession, and when that chief proceeded to Poona, to establish his influence at the court of the Paishwah, Tukajeo became involved in disputes with the leaders, particularly Lukwa Dada, left by Sindia in Hindustan; which terminated, as has been before stated, in an action at the pass of Lakheree, where he was defeated by the infantry of De Boigne ‡ This victory was, from reasons before assigned, productive

* He was the son of the first Bajerow, by a Mahomedan mother, and as his birth deprived him of the privileges of his father's tribe, he was, though acknowledged by the latter as his son, brought up in the religion of his mother

† These accounts had commenced between Ranojee Sindia and Mulhar Row Holkar, and remained unsettled till the period mentioned

‡ This, like all Mahratta defeats, is imputed to treachery, and in the manuscript given me by Tantia Jogh, no less

of no immediate consequences Sindia's troops returned to Hindustan, and those of Tukajee pursued then march to Indore and Mhysir, without retaliating the aggression upon Madhajee's possessions in Malwa This fact leads to a conclusion, that it was more of a quarrel between Tukajee and Madhajee's commander, than between the Sindia and Holkar families

Tukajee remained but a few months in Malwa, from whence he was summoned to join the Mahratta chiefs, then assembling at Poona for a general attack on the dominions of Nizam Ali Khan, which had been long projected The result of this attack has been narrated Tukajee A D 1795 Holkar, who was at this period about seventy years of age, had risen to higher consideration after the death of Madhajee Sindia, being looked up to as the oldest of those Mahratta military chiefs who had witnessed the zenith of their glory, but his real strength was greatly inferior to that of Dowlet Row Sindia, whose youthful impetuosity calculated solely on force, and the consequence was that Tukajee acted a less distinguished part in the transactions which followed the defeat of the Nizam, and the death of the A D 1797 Paishwah Madhoo Row, than might have been expected from his age and reputation He appears,

persons are accused than Casee Row and Bappoo Holkar, the son and nephew of Tukajee

throughout this scene of unparalleled intrigue, as the friend and supporter of Sindia; but he was probably, from years and infirmities, incapable of exertion; for he died before it terminated, leaving behind him the character of a good soldier, a plain unaffected man, and one whose courage was superior to his craft, which is no slight praise for a Mahratta leader. We are greatly prepossessed in favour of Tukajee, by the temper, gratitude, and obedience which he evinced towards Ahalya Bace. Throughout the long period that intervened between his elevation and her death, which occurred two years previous to his own, there never was any serious* dispute, much less a rupture, between them. This reflects great credit on both; but, perhaps, the greatest on Ahalya Bace, whose government of the Holkar territories in Central India must now be noticed. It presents us with few events like those which have been narrated; but its merit consists in their absence. The character of her administration was for more than thirty years the basis of the prosperity which attended the dynasty to which she belonged; and although, latterly, it was obscured by the genius and success of Madhajee Sindia, it continued to

* I considered this fact so extraordinary, that I made the most minute enquiries from numerous persons personally acquainted with both these all confirmed the truth of what we learn from their history

sustain its rank during her life as one of the principal branches of the Mahratta empire. The manner in which the authority of the state was divided between Tukajee and Ahalya Bace has been already mentioned. The management of all the provinces in Malwa and Nemaar was the peculiar department of the latter, and her great object was, by a just and moderate government, to improve the condition of the country, while she promoted the happiness of her subjects. She maintained but a small force independent of the territorial militia, but her troops were sufficient, aided by the equity of her administration, to preserve internal tranquillity, and she relied on the army of the state, actively employed in Hindustan and the Deckan, and on her own reputation, for safety against all external enemies.

It is not common with the Hindus* (unless in those provinces where they have learnt the degrading usage from their Mahomedan conquerors) to confine females, or to compel them to wear veils. The Mahrattas of rank (even the Biah-

* The principal exceptions are the higher classes of Rajpoots, and particularly the Rajas and chiefs of this tribe, and there is reason to conclude they have adopted the practice, in a great degree, from the Mahomedans, as we find many passages in their popular tales to warrant a belief that their customs in this respect were different when the Hindu government prevailed over India.

mins*) have, with few exceptions, rejected the custom, which is not prescribed by any of their religious institutions Ahalya Bae, therefore, offended no prejudice, when she took upon herself the direct management of affairs, and sat every day for a considerable period, in open Durbar, transacting business Her first principle of government appears to have been moderate assessment, and an almost sacred respect for the native rights of village officers and proprietors of lands† She heard every complaint in person; and although she continually referred causes to courts of equity and arbitration, and to her ministers, for settlement, she was always accessible. and so strong was her sense of duty, on all points connected with the distribution of justice, that she is represented as not only patient, but unwearied in the investigation of the most insignificant causes, when appeals were made to her decision.

Aware of the partiality which was to be expected from information supplied by members and adherents of the Holkar family, regarding Ahalya Bae, facts were collected from other quarters

* Mr Scott Waring, in his History of the Mahrattas, mentions having frequently seen the wife of the Ex-Paishwah Bajerow exercising her horse

† These are termed Wuttundars, or holders of native rights, in Central India A particular account of their duties and immunities will be given in the Chapter on Revenue

to guard against the impressions, which the usual details of her administration are calculated to make. It was thought the picture had been overcharged with bright colours, to bring it more into contrast with the opposite system that has since prevailed in the countries she formerly governed, but, although enquiries have been made among all ranks and classes, nothing has been discovered to diminish the eulogiums, or rather blessings, which are poured forth whenever her name is mentioned. The more, indeed, enquiry is pursued, the more admiration is excited but it appears above all extraordinary, how she had mental and bodily powers to go through with the labours she imposed upon herself, and which from the age of thirty to that of sixty*, when she died, were unremitted. The hours gained from the affairs of the state were all given to acts of devotion and charity, and a deep sense of religion appears to have strengthened her mind in the performance of her worldly duties. She used to say, that she “deemed herself answerable to God for every exercise of power,” and in the full spirit of a pious and benevolent mind was wont to exclaim, when urged by her ministers to acts of extreme severity, “Let us, mortals, beware how we destroy the works of the Almighty”

* She succeeded to the administration of the Holkar government in A D 1765, and died in A D 1795

From a very minute narrative* which has been obtained of Ahalya Bae's daily occupations, it appears, that she rose one hour before daybreak to say her morning prayers, and perform the customary ceremonies. She then heard the sacred volumes of her faith read for a fixed period, distributed alms, and gave food, in person, to a number of Brahmins. Her own breakfast was then brought, which was always of vegetable diet, for, although the rules of her tribe did not require it, she had forsworn animal food. After breakfast she again went to prayers, and then took a short repose, after rising from which, and dressing herself, she went about two o'clock to her Duibar, or court, where she usually remained till six in the evening, and when two or three hours had been devoted to religious exercises and a frugal repast, business recommenced about nine o'clock, and continued until eleven, at which hour she retired to

* This was given me by Baramul Dada, the present manager of Mhysir. This sensible old man (now near ninety years of age) was the Kower, or adopted domestic, of Ahalya Bae. His occupation was to wash her tutelary deities and attend her person. His reverence for her memory exceeds all bounds. He gave me a manuscript containing the account in the text of her usual appropriation of time, and of the devotional exercises she imposed upon herself every month in the year, which varied according to the rank and attributes of the presiding divinity of the season.

rest. This course of life, marked by prayer, abstinence, and labour, knew little variation, except what was occasioned by religious fasts and festivals (of which she was very observant), and the occurrence of public emergencies

The success of Ahalya Bae in the internal administration of her domains was altogether wonderful. The principles upon which the collections were made and justice administered, will be noticed hereafter. suffice it here to say, that so efficient were those relations which she had established with foreign princes, that her territories were never invaded, except for a few weeks by Ulsee Rana of Odeypoor, who made an unsuccessful* effort to aid some of his tribe who had seized upon Rampoor. The undisturbed internal tranquillity of the country was even more remarkable than its exemption from foreign attack. This was equally produced by her manner of treating the peaceable, as well as the more turbulent and predatory classes, she was indulgent to the former, and, although firm and severe, just and considerate towards the latter. We shall find no more correct standard by which to estimate a

* Ahalya Bae instantly detached a force under Shereef Bhæe, the commander of her guards, who surprised and defeated the invaders at the village of Palsorah, twenty-four miles North of Mundissor. The Rana, on hearing of this event, sued for peace, which was granted

government in India, than the permanence, or instability of its ministers, and the reputation of its provincial and other public officers. It is a criterion by which the natives always judge of their governors. Ahalya Baee had the same minister*, a Brahmin of excellent character, throughout the whole period of her reign, and her managers were seldom, if ever, changed†.

Indore, which she had raised from a village to a wealthy city, was always regarded by her with particular consideration. Many extraordinary instances of her maternal regard for its inhabitants are narrated. Tukajee Holkar, when encamped near it with the army, had desisted (at the instigation of some interested persons) to share in the wealth of a rich banker‡ who died

* His name was Govind Punt Gunnoo

† Kundee Row was for more than twenty years Komisdar, or manager of Indore, and it is the general tradition, that he gratified his mistress less, by the regularity with which he collected the revenue, than the spectacle he presented her of a happy and contented population

‡ The name of this banker, or Soucar, was Davychund. It is true, that, according to the usage of the Bunniah tribe, the wife succeeds, and it may in strictness be termed unjust to have acted otherwise than Ahalya Baee did on this occasion, but on reference to the common practice of Native governments we find that, in such cases, a large share of the property is often claimed by the state, and a farther sum is usually required for charitable purposes

without children The wife of the deceased hastened to Mhysu, where she implored relief of Ahalya Bae Her story was listened to, a dress, which confirmed her as sole mistress of the house and property of her husband, was betowed upon her, and Tukajee instantly received an order to march a short distance from Indore, and not to molest her city with unjust exactions A ready obedience to the mandate made amends for the error of Tukajee, while the occurrence more endeared Ahalya Bae to a town where her name is to this day not only revered, but adored

Ahalya Bae derived much aid, in the internal administration of her country, from the strength and reputation of Madhajee Sindia, which maintained tranquillity throughout his possessions in Central India She had been greatly indebted to this chief at the commencement of her career, and she continued through life to cultivate his friendship with the fullest sense of its importance His character forbids the conclusion that his motives for supporting her were disinterested, but, although he might have desired to share the treasures left by Mulhai Row to his successors, no prince was ever more alive to the value of impression, and in seeking to be considered the friend of Ahalya Bae, Madhajee was well aware how much he advanced his own reputation It does not appear how she first purchased his support, subse-

quently, however, she lent him thirty lacks of rupees*, for which he gave a bond, but probably without any intention of ever paying it. He perhaps thought his active friendship conferred benefits amply discharging the pecuniary obligation. His managers and other officers, civil and military, had orders to aid and support her authority, and this gave a strength to her government, which, from the intermixed nature of their respective territories, could have been derived from no other quarter.

The tributaries of the Holkar family were, during the administration of Ahalya Bacc, treated with an attention and moderation that made delays even in their payments unusual; and when these occurred, her indignant remonstrances, which were as severe as they were just, inspired an awe that hardly ever failed of effect. The numerous petty leaders† of the Rajpoot tribes, who had, from their ability to pillage, established a claim to a portion of the revenue, were almost all brought to fair and amicable terms. And, as Madhajeo Sindia observed the same policy, this class, generally speaking, were peaceable and contented. The fond object of her life was to promote the

* Besides this loan, Huirkar Bacc (oftener called Mosseah Bacc), the favourite mistress of Mulhar Row, advanced Madhajeo, when in distress, six lacks of rupees.

† These chiefs, who are called Grassials, will be particularly described in a subsequent chapter.

prosperity of all around her, she rejoiced, we are told, when she saw bankers, merchants, farmers, and cultivators, rise to affluence, and, so far from deeming their increased wealth a ground of exaction, she considered it a legitimate claim to increased* favour and protection The set-

* Khealee Ram (the nephew of Himmur Row, formerly a civil officer of high rank in the service of the Nabob of Bhopal), who was two years one of my principal writers, informed me that about thirty-two years ago, when he was manager of Bersiah, a rich Soucar, Subh Khem Doss, died at Seronje without heirs The manager demanded three lacks of rupees, threatening, if this sum was not paid, to seize the property for the state The family desired the widow to adopt a son, but this he peremptorily refused to allow, unless they paid the present, or rather fine, he had demanded The widow and her nephew whom she wished to adopt, attended by a numerous party of relations and friends, hastened to Mhysir Ahalya Bae did not keep them a day in suspense, she removed her manager, confirmed the adoption, and refused even a small present Taking the adopted child upon her knee, she gave him clothes, some jewels, and a palanquin, and sent him and all concerned back to Seronje, to speak, while they existed, of her goodness and justice The object of her bounty is still alive, but he has lived to be despoiled of all his wealth by Ameer Khan, the present possessor of Seronje

Another remarkable instance of Ahalya Bae's disinterestedness was related to me by Tantia Jogh, the present minister of the Holkar state Tuppee Doss and Benares Doss, two brothers, who were Soucars, or bankers, in Kergong, died about the same date, without heirs, leaving two lacks of rupees in specie, and two more due to them Tuppee Doss's wife came to Ahalya Bae, at Mhysir, and, through the elder

tlements of Ahalya Bacc with the Gond plunderers on the Nerbudda, and the Bheels who inhabit the mountainous tracts of the province, were as happy as her other arrangements, and that they had not complete success, is to be imputed to other causes than her want of vigour or sagacity. She first tried gentle measures of conciliation with this class, but, finding them ineffectual, she had recourse to a more rigorous system. Several incorrigible offenders* were taken and put to death. Such examples of her severe justice were rare, for though she knew well how to inspire dread, when it was necessary, in the minds of the most hardened robbers, conciliation and kindness were the means she preferred; and, while

brother of Tantia Jogh, proposed to make over to the state, the fortune her husband and her brother had accumulated under its protection. Ahalya Bacc declined the offer, and advised the widow (if she did not want it) to bestow it in charity, or expend it in public and useful buildings that would do honour to her husband's memory. The advice was taken, and a Ghaut, or flight of stone steps, to the river at Kergong, with a temple dedicated to Gunputty, still remain as memorials of the manner in which the wealth which Ahalya Bacc rejected was expended.

* Amongst these was Mundroop Singh, a noted freebooter, whose strong-hold was Sillanah, on the banks of the Nerbudda. The trouble I had for three years with the descendants of this robber chief gave me full insight into the atrocities which compelled Ahalya Bacc to exert a severity to which her nature was reluctant.

she deterred them from the continuance of a life of plunder by the establishment of posts, she invited them to a better mode of life, by the most considerate attention to their habits. Their ancient right to a small duty* on goods passing their hills was admitted; but she exacted, in recompense for her concessions, and for the grants she made them of waste lands, an obligation to protect the roads, and to recover any property that was stolen within their respective† limits. There would be no end to a minute detail of the measures of her internal policy. It is sufficient to observe, she has become, by general suffrage, the model of good government in Malwa. Tantia Jogh, the present minister of the prince Mulhai Row, is satisfied that he is at once pleasing us, gratifying the family with the management of whose affairs he is entrusted, and gaining popularity, by professing to follow the example of

* This is called the Bheel's Cowry. It differs in almost every place, but is no where above half a piece on a bullock load.

† I have had the same settlement to make with the same class of people, and while the present minister of the Holkar government has considered that he went as far in liberal conciliation as he could, by agreeing to restore the relations which were established in Ahalya Bacc's time, I have never found the rudest inhabitants of the mountains desire farther indulgence. This is incontrovertible evidence of her able conduct in this difficult department of her administration.

this extraordinary female; and her name is considered such excellent authority, that an objection is never made, when her practice is pleaded as the precedent

The correspondence of Ahalya Bacc extended to the most remote parts of India. It was generally carried on through Brahmins, who were the agents of her pious munificence, which was as unexampled as it was unbounded. When the treasures of Holkar came into her possession, she is stated to have appropriated them, by the performance of a religious ceremony*, (common with Hindus,) to the purposes of charity and good works. She built several forts, and at that of Jaum constructed a road, with great labour and cost, over the Vindhya range, where it is almost perpendicular. She expended considerable sums in religious edifices at Mhysir, and built many temples†, Dhurmsallas (or places of rest for travellers), and wells, throughout the Holkar possessions in Malwa. But her munificence was not limited to her own territories, at all the principal places of Hindu pilgrimage, including as far

* She placed water in her hand, and having mixed with it some leaves of the Toolsee tree while a Brahmin pronounced a prayer, she sprinkled the water over the treasure, which was considered by this act devoted to charity

† That at the village of Nimawur opposite Hindia, which she erected, although small, is one of the most beautiful buildings I have seen in this quarter of India

East and West as Jaggernath in Cuttack, and Dwaraca in Guzerat, and as far North as Kedarnath*, among the snowy mountains of Himalaya, and South as Ramiseram, near Cape Comorin, she built holy edifices, maintained establishments, and sent annual sums to be distributed in charity. Her principal structures are at Gyah, where a figure of herself adoring the image of Mahadeva is preserved in one of the temples; and she is sainted among her own tribe, by its having been placed near the statues of the god Rámachandra, and his wife, the goddess Seeta

Besides the fixed yearly disbursements which Ahalya Bae sent to support her establishments at the holy shrines of India, proportional, but less sums, were remitted to other sanctuaries. In addition to this fixed charity, she occasionally bestowed other presents, and nothing added more to her fame in the Southern regions of the peninsula, than the constant supply of Ganges water, which she was in the habit of sending to wash the

* Captain T D Steuart, one of my political assistants, when travelling to Kedarnath in 1818, had frequent opportunities of remarking the veneration in which the memory of Ahalya Bae is held in that remote part of India. There is an excellent stone Dhurmsalla still in good repair, and a Coond, or reservoir of water, built at the expense of that princess, for the accommodation of pilgrims and travellers at the stage beyond Mundul, and about three thousand feet higher, where not a vestige of any other habitation is to be found.

sacred images of the different temples These extensive and pious donations probably proceeded from a sincere belief in her religion, and a desire to promote her own and her country's welfare, by propitiating the favour of the deities she worshipped, but we find in many of her observances and institutions, a spirit of charity which had the truest character of wisdom and benevolence. She daily fed the poor, and on particular festivals gave entertainments to the lowest classes. During the hot months of the year persons were stationed on the roads to supply travellers with water; and at the commencement of the cold season she gave clothes to great numbers of her dependants, and to infirm people Her feelings of general humanity were often carried to an extraordinary excess The beasts of the field, the birds of the air, and the fish of the river shared in her compassion; portions of food were allotted to them, and the peasant near Mhysir used in hot days to see his yoke of oxen stopped during their labour to be refreshed with water brought by a servant of Ahalya Bae; while fields she had purchased were covered with flocks of birds, that had been justly, as Ahalya Bae used to observe, driven by cultivators from destroying the grain, on which the latter depended for their own sustenance

We may smile at such universal sympathy, and perhaps censure the bigotry which bestowed on Brahmins the largest share of her

charity, and wasted the treasures of a state in the erection and maintenance of edifices in distant lands, but it was well asked by an intelligent Brahmin*, (to whom this remark was addressed,) “ Whether Ahalya Bae, by spending “ double the money on an army that she did in “ charity and good works, could have preserved “ her country for above thirty years in a state of “ profound peace, while she rendered her subjects “ happy and herself adored? No person (he added) “ doubts the sincerity of her piety, but if she had “ merely possessed worldly wisdom, she could have “ devised no means so admirably calculated to “ effect the object I was (this person concluded) “ in one of the principal offices at Poona during “ the last years of her administration, and know “ well what feelings were excited by the mere “ mention of her name Among the princes of “ her own nation, it would have been looked upon “ as sacrilege to have become her enemy, or, “ indeed, not to have defended her against any “ hostile attempt She was considered by all in “ the same light The Nizam of the Deckan and “ Tippoo Sultan granted her the same respect as “ the Paishwah, and Mahomedans joined with “ Hindus in prayers for her long life and prosperity ”

* I quote here the precise words of the reply made to an observation of mine that expressed doubt of the wisdom of Ahalya Bae's conduct

An event occurred in the latter years of Ahalya Bae of too interesting and afflicting a nature to be passed over in silence. The melancholy death of her only son, Malee Row, has been noticed. She had, besides, one daughter, Muchta Bae, who was married*, and had one son†, who, after reaching manhood, died at Mhysu. Twelve months afterwards his father died, and Muchta Bae declared immediately her resolution to burn with the corpse of her husband. No efforts (short of coercion) that a mother and a sovereign could use were untried by the virtuous Ahalya Bae to dissuade her daughter from the fatal resolution. She humbled herself to the dust before her, and entreated her, as she revered her God, not to leave her desolate and alone upon earth. Muchta Bae, although affectionate, was calm and resolved. "You are old, mother, (she said) and a few years will end your pious life. My only child and husband are gone, and when you follow, life, I feel, will be insupportable; but the opportunity of terminating it with honour will then have passed." Ahalya Bae, when she found all dissuasion unavailing, determined to witness the last dreadful scene. She walked in the procession, and stood near the pile, where she was supported by two Brahmuns, who held her arms. Although

* Her husband's name was Jeswunt Row Paunseah

† The child's name was Nutheabah

obviously suffering great agony of mind, she remained tolerably firm till the first blaze of the flame made her lose all self-command, and while her shrieks increased the noise made by the exulting shouts of the immense multitude that stood around, she was seen to gnaw in anguish those hands she could not liberate from the persons by whom she was held. After some convulsive efforts, she so far recovered as to join in the ceremony of bathing in the Nerbudda, when the bodies were consumed. She then retired to her palace, where for three days, having taken hardly any sustenance, she remained so absorbed in grief that she never uttered a word. When recovered from this state, she seemed to find consolation in building a beautiful monument* to the memory of those she lamented.

These particulars are related on the authority of several persons who were near witnesses of the affecting scene, besides that of Baramul Dada†, who was throughout in attendance on her. It is pleasing to find that her devotion, although it

* There are few modern temples in India of more beautiful and finished workmanship than this monument of maternal love.

† I went to the spot where this afflicting scene occurred, with the venerable Baramul Dada, and though much affected, he seemed to take a melancholy delight in shewing the spot where the pile was made, and that where his mistress stood to witness her daughter's sacrifice.

forbad her to infringe what usage had sanctioned and rendered holy, had not subdued in this admirable woman's mind the natural feelings of humanity

Ahalya Bacc died at the age of sixty, worn out with care and fatigue, and, according to some, she hastened her death by a too strict observance of the numerous fasts prescribed by her religion. She was of middle stature, and very thin. Though at no period of her life handsome*, her complexion, which was of a dark olive, was clear; and her countenance is described as having been to the last hour of her existence agreeable, and expressive of that goodness which marked every action of her life. She was very cheerful, and seldom in anger, but, when provoked by wickedness or crime, the most esteemed of her attendants trembled† to

* When the beautiful but wicked Anuntia Bacc, wife of Ragobah, and mother of Bajerow, the ex-Paishwah, was at Dhar, envious, perhaps, of the fame of Ahalya Bacc, she sent a female attendant to bring an account of her looks. The woman is reported to have said on her return, "Ahalya Bacc has not beautiful features, but a heavenly light is on her countenance"—"But she is not handsome, you say," was the only reply of her mistress, who felt consolation in this part of the report.

† Baramul Dada, the venerable manager of Mhysir, who was for many years one of her most favourite servants, assured me that when really in anger, which was of rare occurrence, her countenance struck terror into the minds of the boldest.

approach her The mind of this extraordinary woman had been more cultivated than is usual with *Hindus* she could read, and understood the *Puranas*, or sacred books, which were her favourite study She is represented as having been singularly quick and clear in the transaction of public business Her husband was killed before she was twenty years of age, and to that misfortune were added the vice and insanity of her son These afflictions made a strong impression on her mind After her husband's death she never wore coloured clothes*, nor any jewels except a small necklace, and, indeed, remained, amid every temptation, unchanged in her habits or character Flattery even appears to have been lost upon *Ahalya Baee* A Brahmin wrote a book in her praise, which she heard read with patience, but, after observing " she was a weak sinful woman, and not deserving such fine encomiums," she directed it to be thrown into the *Nerbudda*, and took no farther notice of the author† The facts that have been stated of *Ahalya Baee* rest on

* She always dressed in plain white clothes, according to the usage of *Hindu* widows, without even an embroidered or coloured border

† This anecdote was related to me by *Baramul Dada*, when sitting on the terrace of her palace at *Mhysir*, which overhangs the *Nerbudda*.

grounds that admit of no scepticism * It is, however, an extraordinary picture :—a female without vanity, a bigot without intolerance†, a mind imbued with the deepest superstition, yet receiving no impressions except what promoted the happiness of those under its influence, a being exercising, in the most active and able manner, despotic power, not merely with sincere humility, but under the severest moral restraint that a strict conscience could impose on human action ; and all this combined with the greatest indulgence for the weakness and faults of others Such, at least, is the account which the natives of Malwa give of Ahalya Bacc with them her name is sainted, and she is styled an Avatai, or Incarnation of the Divinity In the most sober view that can be taken of her character, she certainly appears, within her limited sphere, to have been one of the purest and most exemplary rulers that ever existed ; and she

* Independently of the numerous and authentic sources from which these facts are drawn, my duty led to my making, in detail, settlements and agreements with the same classes, and the minute evidence I have obtained regarding the acts and measures of the internal administration of Ahalya Bacc places its real character beyond all doubt

† Intolerance is not a defect of the Hindu religion, but Ahalya Bacc is represented to have gone farther, and to have been peculiarly kind and considerate to such of her subjects as differed from her in faith

affords a striking example of the practical benefit a mind may receive from performing worldly duties under a deep sense of responsibility to its Creator.

The life of Ahalya Bae has been given at greater length than was contemplated, but it forms too proud an epoch in the history of the house of Holkar to be slightly passed over. She left no heir to her fortune and power, and we now proceed to notice those destroyers, who came to ruin the fair prospects which her government had opened to the inhabitants of her dominions.

For nearly two years after the death of Ahalya Bae, the territories of the Holkar family continued prosperous, but the death of Tukajee was followed by contests which led to their desolation. This chief left two sons, Casee Row and Mulhar Row, by his wife; and two, Jeswunt Row and Etojee, by a mistress. The pretensions of Casee Row were prior from birth, but he was weak in intellect and deformed in body, and quite unequal to the active duties of the government. This made his father and Ahalya Bae desire that he should remain at Mhysir, while Mulhar Row, a brave and aspiring youth, commanded the armies. In other words, that the latter should perform the duties of Tukajee, and his brother those of Ahalya Bae. The belief of such a plan being practicable, is a proof how easily the judg-

ment may be blinded by affection · a day's union was not to be expected from the opposite character of the brothers, and from the moment of their father's death, they plotted each other's destruction Mulhai Row had pressed his father, on the ground of his superior fitness, to name him his sole successor; and, offended at his non-compliance, had thrown himself on the protection of Nana Furnavese, who promised him assistance The troops were also in his favour, and his prospect of attaining the sovereign power seemed certain, when Casee Row, then at Mhysir, entreated Dowlet Row Sindia, or rather his minister, the notorious Sujec Row Ghatkia, to support his pretensions This was promised, and on his arrival at Poona his cause was openly espoused To prevent, however, the escape of his brother and a protracted warfare a reconciliation was sought and concluded, but on the night of the day on which this was effected, and the ceremony of a sacred oath* had passed between them, the camp of Mulhai Row was surrounded by the disciplined battalions of Sindia The former was

* The oath taken on this occasion was that of Bel-bundar, or "the pledge of the Bel," one of the most sacred a Hindu can take The Bel-tree is rendered holy by its leaves being used in the worship of Mahadeva When this oath is taken, some of its leaves are filled with turmeric, and interchanged with solemn pledges by the parties

apprised, at daybreak, of his danger, and immediately mounted his horse, but before any defensive arrangements could be made, he was killed by a ball which pierced his forehead. The price of this infamous act of treachery was the restoration of the bonds* given by Madhajeo Sindia to Ahalya Bae and Hurka Bae, and the payment of fifteen lacks of rupees†, ten of which were in ready money, while the revenue of Amber, in the Deckan, was mortgaged for the remainder.

The whole‡ of Holkar's troops, except a few followers of Caseo Row, were dispersed, and then camp plundered. Among the fugitives was Jeswunt Row, who carried with him a few of the household horse, and, according to report, some of the family jewels. He sought protection at Nagpoor, but a belief of his possessing property, or a desire to conciliate the Poona government and Sindia§, made Ragojee Bhonslah seize and con-

* I am assured of this fact by persons who, having been in the service of the Holkar family at the period, must have been informed of its correctness.

† This latter sum was demanded as payment for powder and shot expended on the occasion.

‡ The army of Holkar with Mulhar Row at Poona only amounted to three or four thousand men.

§ Both the ministers of the Paishwah and Dowlet Row Sindia addressed strong letters to Ragojee Bhonslah on this occasion.

fine him He remained in prison six months, when he made his escape, but was again taken: he, however, a second time eluded his guard, and arrived in Candeish, a year and a half after Mulhar Row was slain. He was accompanied, in this second flight, by a Mahomedan* soldier, and an active intelligent Hindu of the name of Bhuwanee Shunkur†. When they reached Candeish, Jeswunt Row went to the village of Goorgaum to see his tutor Chumna Bhow, who gave him a mare‡ and three hundred rupees, advising him not to remain there, but to proceed towards Malwa He went first to the small fort of Kookernada, within six coss of Nunderbar; and we may judge of his low and desperate condition at this period, from his having become for two or three months the associate of the Bheel chief who

* This man's name was Shah Mahomed, we hear no more of him, and he probably died soon, as Jeswunt Row was not ungrateful to the few friends who aided him in adversity

† Bhuwanee Shunkur was, when he attached himself to Jeswunt Row, a common writer to a party of ten horse, and rose to be Buckshee, or paymaster of his whole army. He will be noticed hereafter

‡ The name of this mare was Lunka, she was of a chesnut colour, and became, though old and not handsome, a great favourite, and was celebrated by Jeswunt Row making her, on the Dusserah feast, his chief object of Poojah, or worship, and calling her the origin of his fortunes.

possessed the fastness to which he had fled * From Kookernada, Jeswunt Row went first to Burwanee, and afterwards to Dhumpooree, a town on the Nerbudda, belonging to the family of Puar, the chief of which, Anund Row, when he received intelligence of his arrival, sent directions for his being forwarded by the route of Mandoo to Dhar, he also sent a dross and a palanquin to meet him, and directed that all his wants should be liberally supplied These extended, at this low ebb of his fortune, even to clothes to cover himself and his few followers

Jeswunt Row remained two or three months at Dhar, where several of the old adherents of his family joined his standard, but they were, like himself, in a wretched state of poverty Fortunately, at this period, Rung Row Ourekur, with a body of Patans and Pindarries, made an attack on Anund Row† The Puar prince had actually commenced his retreat, and had abandoned two guns, when he was stopped by Jeswunt Row, who entreating him to stand his ground, promised that

* It was about this period that he must have learnt the fate of his brother Etojee, who, flying from Poona at the same time, had become the associate of freebooters, and was taken and trampled to death by an elephant in that city

† This attack was made at Kisowul, in a village sixteen miles South-east of Dhar

he would still win the victory for him. Taking a slip of paper, he wrote a short note addressed to the leaders of the Pindarries with Ourekur, stating that "Jeswunt Row Holkar was with the Puar, "and desired them, as adherents of his family, to "withdraw" The Pindarries at first doubted the fact, but, when convinced of the truth by the messenger who carried it, they fell back and created a confusion, during which the guns were recovered. Jeswunt Row, springing from his horse, seized a sponge staff, and aided by some men, who were animated by his example, fired two or three rounds with good aim at the Afghans, who were again advancing to the attack, the consequence was their retreat from the field, and the precipitate flight of Ourekur.

The gratitude of Anund Row was commensurate with the service that had been rendered him; but Jeswunt Row asked nothing but a promise to give him refuge when in extreme distress. His having fled to Dhar was no sooner known than Sindia threatened Anund Row with his highest displeasure, if he were not seized or expelled; and it is related, that the generosity of Jeswunt Row would not permit him to be the ruin of his protector, which seemed certain if he protracted his stay. He solicited, and obtained, a small aid in money, and having received, besides ten thousand rupees, a present of seven horses, he left Dhar with this number of mounted followers and seven more

belonging to Shamrow Madick, a Mahratta who had attached himself to his fortunes To this train he added about one hundred and twenty ragged half-armed foot, composed of his adherents, who had been plundered at Poona of their horses and property The first enterprise he attempted with this party was against one hundred of Casee Row's household troops at Debalpoor*, which by a rapid movement he completely surprised, and not only obtained some good horses by this success, but also a seasonable supply of money, which he extorted from the helpless inhabitants of the town This enterprise may be deemed the commencement of the predatory career, which he appears, from the moment he returned to Malwa, to have considered the only means of preserving his own power, or rescuing the possessions of his family from Dowlet Row Sindia, in whose hands Casee Row was at this time a mere instrument Jeswunt Row was not, however, inattentive to the feelings and pride of that family, of which he was an illegitimate branch, and he knew too well the

* Debalpoor is a town belonging to the Holkar family, situated about four miles from the right bank of the Chumbul The Chevalier Dudernaic, who had been encamped at it with the brigade he commanded in the service of Casee Row, marched for Indore, leaving the Pagah horse for the protection of Debalpoor

FAMILY OF HOLKAR

strength he might gain or lose by consulting or neglecting the prejudices of the adherents and subjects of the house of Holkar, to venture on a direct usurpation of the chief authority: but, under the pretext of Casee Row's complete incapacity, from natural defects, mental and corporeal, he proclaimed his allegiance to Kundee Row, the infant son of Mulhar Row *, by having a Persian seal engraved, before he left Dhar, with the inscription "Jeswunt Row †, the subordinate of Sevaee Kundee Row." and under this designation he began to collect an army, into which all classes, Pindaries, Bheels, Afghans, Mahattas, and Rajpoots, were indiscriminately admitted. He had gone from Debalpore to Jowrah, and thence to Mahidpore, but the manager of the former ‡ desired to seize him, and the officer in charge of the latter refused him the slightest assist-

* This child was born some months after the death of his father

† This Persian seal was "Jeswunt Row Fedvee Sevaee Kundee Row" On his Mahatta one was engraved "at the feet of the husband of Mahala, (i. e. Kundee Row, the deity of Jejoory,) the son of Mulhar Row Kundee Row"

‡ Gungaram Kottaree, a Banyan, was at this time manager of Jowrah. He was an able man, and Jeswunt Row, when he came to power, after making his conduct on this occasion a pretence for exacting money, employed him in high situations. He was for nine or ten years manager of Rampoor and Bampoor, and several other districts. Mugnee Rani,

ance He then marched East towards Sarungpoor; and Vizei Hussein, a Seid of that town, who had been before in the service of the Holkar family, was the first man of respectability in Malwa who joined him This leader added to the weight of his name, and the services of forty or fifty horse and two or three hundred foot, a present of five thousand rupees; and it was by his advice that Jeswunt Row made an overture to Ameer Khan, then encamped at Bhopal with fifteen hundred foot The Mahomedan leader, having accepted the invitation, marched immediately to Shujahalpoor, and the first meeting of those two chiefs, since so celebrated in the annals of predatory warfare, took place at Ranagunje The terms A D 1798 of their union were soon settled Ameer Khan gave an engagement never to desert the fortunes of Jeswunt Row, and received a written promise to share equally in all future plunder and conquest There could be little trouble in making an agreement between men whose fortunes were at the moment alike desperate, and neither of whom were restrained by any scruples, as to its future performance, likely to obstruct the promotion of their personal interests Their joint career commenced by a demand of contribution from the Aumil of Shujahalpoor, and that officer, who had

the son of Gungaram Kottaree, is still in the service of the Holkar family

a few days before insulted Jeswunt Row with an offer of two hundred rupees, was now compelled to pay seven thousand to purchase his absence, and that of his new ally. After marching from Shujahpore, Jeswunt Row plundered some merchants, whose property, consisting of clothes to the amount of forty thousand rupees, furnished his new levies with pay, and brought thousands of recruits to his standard.

His next exploit was to pillage some towns and districts belonging to Dowlut Row Sindia, on the Nerbudda. From Hindia, which he sacked, he marched to the village of Kusrawud opposite Mundleysir, where he had an action with a strong detachment of the Campoo, or brigade, of the Chevalier Dudermaie, (then in the service of Casee Row,) which had been sent from that officer's head-quarters at Indore to attack him. Jeswunt Row was victorious, after a severe contest, the detachment was destroyed, and eight standards and four guns, which fell into the hands of the conqueror, greatly increased both his means and reputation. He marched immediately to Mhysir, but he was soon driven thence, and fled to Sutwass, where he took seven guns, which he repaired and carried along with him to Burgondah*, with the intention of inviting to his standard

* The village of Burgondah is six miles South-west of the

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